Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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FBIS-NES-96-099 *21 May 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: PFLP, DFLP Urge APU To Reject Normalization With Israel

JN1705174196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Unified Command of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] urged the participants in the 27th session of the Arab Parliamentary Union [APU] to adopt decisions that will help restore Arab solidarity, which will enable the Arab nation to confront the challenges that face it.

In a political memorandum sent to the Arab parliamentarians' meeting, the PFLP and the DFLP Unified Command said it hopes the conferees will adopt a resolution that rejects normalization with the Israeli occupiers as long as they continue to occupy Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, southern Lebanon, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. The command stresses that the Palestinian people adhere to the national charter, the unanimity program, the unity of the people both inside the homeland and abroad, and the comprehensive solution based on the resolutions of international legitimacy that pertain to the Palestine question and the Arab League's resolutions that emphasize the Palestinian people's right to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of the independent national state with its capital in Jerusalem.

The Unified Command also stresses that the Palestinian people reject the Oslo Agreement and will confront its serious threats. It also emphasizes the need to rebuild the PLO institutions and the PLO's national coalition on the basis of its national principles.

Inter-Arab: Iraqi Delegate Addresses APU Damascus Meetings

JN1705185296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0915 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 17 May (INA)—The Iraqi National Assembly urged the Arab Parliamentary Union [APU] to call on the U.S. Administration and the British Government to stop their interference in the ongoing Iraq-UN talks on exchanging oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs of the Iraqi people.

In a speech to the participants at the APU's 27th session in Damascus, Hamid Yusuf Hammadi, head of the Iraqi National Assembly's delegation to the APU's 27th session, said: The U.S. Administration obstructed Iraq's talks with the UN General Secretariat in 1992, 1993, and 1994. When Iraq was close to an agreement with the United Nations, the U.S. Administration set more arbitrary conditions.

He added that this U.S.-British game not only deliberately violates the UN Charter and the foundations of work at the United Nations, it also persists in pursuing the most hideous violations of human rights in Iraq, thus conflicting with all international charters and norms. The divine laws call for honoring, respecting, and protecting humans regardless of their nationality, language, color, or religion. This is because the Almighty God made men his representatives on earth and considered the selling out and violation of human rights as a call for corruption, degradation, chaos, and undermining of God's creatures and creed.

Hammadi also urged the Arab countries and the Arab League to make a serious move to support the international efforts designed to lift the blockade imposed on Iraq, as well as to expedite the implementation of Paragraph 22 of UN Security Council Resolution 687 in order to lift the blockade completely. He also urged them to work for releasing Iraq's foreign assets, which have been frozen, so that Iraq can purchase food and medicine.

Hammadi reviewed the negative impact of the ongoing blockade due to the acute shortages of food and medicine, which has serious repercussions on the lives of the Iraqi people.

He added that the UN Security Council issued 31 resolutions against Iraq. As was acknowledged by many independent observers, these are the most unjust and most arbitrary resolutions in UN history. These resolutions paralyzed Iraq and its contributions to the consolidation of Arab cooperation in terms of establishing a joint Arab development fund and Arab investment companies to enhance Arab solidarity and common security. They also paralyzed the coordination of positions at the Arab and international levels on issues that are crucial to the nation.

He said that despite these circumstances, Iraq's leader Saddam Husayn sought to deprive the enemies of their opportunity and succeeded in aborting the conspiracies against Iraq's leadership, people, national policy, and resources. Saddam Husayn rebuilt Iraq's infrastructure in exceptional time, without any help, and under an unprecedented comprehensive blockade.

Hamid Yusuf Hammadi presented to the Arab parliamentarians examples of unjust resolutions issued by the UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee that disregard international and human norms and express the level of hatred and sadism that those individuals or governments responsible for these resolutions have reached.

He noted that imposing economic sanctions against countries is a double-edged sword. Not only does it con-

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flict with the objectives of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and related international pledges, it causes great regional and international damage. Economic experts estimate that the siege against Iraq has caused losses of $120 billion in regional and international trade.

In his address, Hamid Yusuf Hammadi stressed the importance of reinforcing Arab solidarity. He said that if true Arab solidarity is realized among the nation's basic pillars, this will shape the nation's identity and renew its confidence in itself and its potential, and it will refuse to accept anything less than assuming its appropriate position and enjoying the respect of other countries based on equitability and without humiliation or hegemony.

Iraq stressed that it is eager to cooperate with its brothers, especially at this stage, which is considered the most critical and serious stage of modern Arab history because its results will affect the future of the Arab homeland.

Inter-Arab: Bahraini, Iraqi Parliamentary Delegations Leave Damascus

JN1805145996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ibrahim Muhammad Hasan Humaydan, chairman of the Bahraini Consultative Council, said that President Hafiz al-Asad's meeting with the heads of the Arab parliamentary delegations was a great event that gave a strong push to the success of the Arab Parliamentary Union [APU] Council meeting in Damascus.

In a statement to a SANA [Syrian Arab News Agency] correspondent before leaving Damascus today after the APU Council's meetings, Humaydan said that President al-Asad reviewed all issues of interest to the Arab nation and governments in detail.

Humaydan added: His excellency's remarks were comprehensive, and they addressed all the issues and the developments in these issues. Humaydan said that the Arab parliamentarians' meetings were successful and addressed many Arab issues, particularly the peace process and the Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

Humaydan praised the great efforts to render the conference a success and to formulate solutions that interested everyone.

Humaydan was seen off at Damascus International Airport by 'Abd-al-Qadir Qaddurah, People's Assembly speaker; Shakir Is'ayyid, head of the Arab and Foreign Affairs Committee in the People's Assembly; and the Bahraini ambassador in Damascus.

Hamid Yusuf Hammadi, head of the Culture, Information, and Education Committee in the Iraqi National Assembly, and his delegation also left Damascus today after participating in the APU Council's 27th session. Hammadi was seen off at Damascus International Airport by People's Assembly member Tawfiq Darwish.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Issues 'Ultimatum' on Release of Salamah

TA2105130196 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 21 May 96 p 1

[Report by Yosi Torpstein]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam brigades, the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] terror arm, yesterday distributed a leaflet demanding that the Israeli Government immediately free Hasan Salamah who was captured in Hebron three days ago. The leaflet gives Israel a seven-day ultimatum for the release.

If Israel does not meet their demand, the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam brigades warn, they will start abducting IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers and resume terror attacks against Israeli children. The leaflet was signed by the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam elite unit. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Dismayed by al-Zahhar Call To Halt Operations

JN2005115896 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 20 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD has learned that there are growing demands within the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leadership and its rank and file for the expulsion of Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar after his recent statements urging the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam battalions to halt their military operations until after the Israeli Knesset elections.

These statements have drawn the strong dissatisfaction of Hamas leaders and its rank and file. They also prompted the official Hamas spokesman, Engineer Ibrahim Ghawshah, to react quickly and say that al-Zahhar's statements reflect his personal views rather than the views of Hamas.

An official Hamas statement said that al-Zahhar's remarks reflect a position that he has held for a long time and that Hamas has never endorsed.

Informed sources told AL-MAJD that these statements by al-Zahhar were the result of pressure by the Palestinian Authority. This pressure is designed to promote the authority's goal of seeing Shim'on Peres and the Labor Party win elections.

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The sources added: The Hamas leadership contacted al-Zahhar and asked him to refrain from making such statements, especially since the articulation of Hamas' positions is the task of the official Hamas spokesman, Engineer Ibrahim Ghawshah, and no one else's.

The sources did not rule out the possibility that al-Zahhar could soon meet the same fate as 'Imad al-Faluji, who was expelled from Hamas after being one of its key leaders in Gaza.

In a separate development, AL-MAJD has learned that the Hamas leadership is extremely dismayed by the policies of the Salvation Party, especially after its official spokesman, Fikri 'Abd-al-Latif, expressed the party's readiness to join the Palestinian Authority's cabinet, even though 'Arafat did not offer the party any ministerial portfolio.

Informed Palestinian sources said that Hamas, which was indifferent to the creation of the Salvation Party, may find itself forced to confront the party and kill popular support for it.

Palestinian Affairs: Ghawshah Denies Hamas Ready To Stop Anti-Zionist Operations

LD2005143596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In an interview with the African and Arab programs of the IRIB [Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting], the representative of the Islamic Resistance [Movement] of Palestine, Hamas, Abu-Hamdan, pointed to the recent claim made by Zionist officials on the arrest of a member of Lebanese Hizballah and said that the Zionist regime, by raising this false claim, wants to deviate the world's public opinion from the crimes committed in Lebanon and pretend that the domestic crises in occupied Palestine have outside roots.

Abu-Hamdan added that Shim'on Peres, by accusing the Islamic Republic of Iran of supporting the Hizballah and [and stating] that the person detained by Israel was missioned by Iran to conduct operations inside occupied Palestine, [was making] an attempt to make the Western world face Islam and thus improving his situation in the upcoming election. In the interview, Hamas official spokesman, Ibrahim Ghawshah, said: The released Hamas statement, concerning the movement's readiness to stop anti-Zionist operations, is false, saying that it is aimed at damaging Hamas's credit [as heard].

Mr. Ghawshah stressed the continuation of Hamas's anti-Zionist struggles until the final victory and the return of Palestinian people to their homeland. Abu-Fakhir, a member of the Palestinian movement's central committee, also said that 'Arafat's compromise with the Zionist regime not only did not bring any achievement for the Palestinian people, but drowned the Palestinian nation in misery. He said: Those who omitted [as heard] the national charter of Palestine have in fact sold out the land and nation of Palestine to the Zionists and got themselves involved on behalf of the Zionists.

Also the press spokesman of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Mr. 'Ali Badran, termed omitting Palestine's national charter by the PLO as a gift from 'Arafat to Shim'on Peres on the eve of the Zionist regime's elections.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas—U.S. Attitude on Qana 'Unacceptable'

BR2005133096 Barcelona LA VANGUARDIA in Spanish 15 May 96 p 7

[Interview with Hamas leader Muhammad al-Zahhar by Henrique Cymerman in Gaza on 13 May: "Zahar: 'All Palestinians Are Prepared To Be Martyrs if Necessary'" — first two paragraphs are LA VANGUARDIA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an exclusive interview in his Gaza hospital, Muhammad al-Zahhar, a leader of the Hamas Islamic Resistance Movement recently freed from a Palestinian jail after 55 days imprisonment, stated: "The Israeli Labor Party and the Likud are two sides of the same coin. Nothing will change if the Likud wins the elections, they will continue to be the cause of Palestinian suffering."

The Hamas leader added: "The Israelis say that they will stop terrorism by every means and yet they are responsible for our military action, as is the international community which always puts Israel's interests ahead of our's."

[Cymerman] Your armed brigades are coming under strong pressure from the Palestinian Authority and more than 1,000 members of Hamas are in prison. Do you think they are capable of committing attacks in Israel?

[Al-Zahhar] In the past 11 months I have spent five and a half [months] in the prison of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] just to satisfy Israel. We have been treated just as harshly by Israel in the past and always our military action (terrorist attacks — LA VANGUARDIA editor's note) and the political sector were capable of rapid reorganization. Nobody can see what is really stirring underground right now.

[Cymerman] Do you mean you intend to carry out a fresh attack on Israel before the elections of 29 May?

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[Al-Zahhar] I was only released a few days ago because my youngest brother had been killed. I cannot seriously say yes or no. The only thing I can say is that a few minutes ago there was an attack on settlers in Beit El (evening of Monday 13 May — LA VANGUARDIA editor's note) and that a Jordanian tourist has just been taken in by the Israelis accused of conspiring to take military action. Israel and the PNA are collaborating on security issues and know well what is going on here.

[Cymerman] Is Hamas planning military reprisals for the Israeli attacks on Lebanon?

[Al-Zahhar] Everything remains open. The Muslims are angry and frustrated at seeing innocent people being killed in Qana and no clear condemnation from the rest of the world. The American attitude was unacceptable. They did not arrange any conference to condemn the crime. We do not like killing, but the people are very frustrated.

[Cymerman] 'Arafat has never been this hard on Hamas. Is there a danger of civil war?

[Al-Zahhar] The PNA is interrogating our people about their activities in the "intifada," destroying our institutions, mistreating us. They humiliated me by shaving off my beard. They changed their attitude not because we were acting against the colonists but because the international community applied pressure on them to do something or it would call the whole thing off. We are afraid of action that leads to disaster and we hope to avoid a war between Palestinians. Israel is the only guilty party. We want to strike up fresh relations with the PNA.

[Cymerman] The PNA would rather have Shim'on Peres in power and believes that a new Hamas attack could lead to a defeat for the Labor Party at the polls and victory for the Right.

[Al-Zahhar] If Netanyahu [Likud] wins the elections he will be like Peres. In reality we Palestinians are suffering more under the Labor Party. They deported 400 Palestinians to Lebanon — I was one of them — in intolerable conditions. Now they are imprisoning thousands of Palestinians in Israel. After the recent actions in Israel I asked Hamas' military wing to stop their attacks and they agreed. We will stop for three months provided Israel does not take action against Palestinian civilians.

[Cymerman] You have known more than one Shaid or suicide martyr. How can anyone be prepared to die for an ideal?

[Al-Zahhar] We are not a secular people. We are religious. Martyrdom is one of the our ways of reaching our goals, and has been practiced for 1,400 years. We do not think they should be called suicide attacks. Whether or not it is effective is something that those who practice it have to decide.

[Cymerman] How many Palestinians are prepared to become martyrs?

[Al-Zahhar] Who can say? I think they are all prepared to do it if necessary. The question is whether that would benefit the Palestinians or not. That is something that will have to be decided by the people giving the orders.

[Cymerman] Is Hamas talking about whether it should continue the killing?

[Al-Zahhar] Yes, both here and in Jordan, and we hope that our spiritual leader, Ahmed Yasin, can be released from jail in Israel to give us his opinion. He is very ill and almost deaf. If he dies in jail the region will explode.

[Cymerman] Is it possible that one day Hamas could recognize the state of Israel?

[Al-Zahhar] From an Islamic point of view, no foreign presence can be accepted in Palestine. Thus it is a very difficult question and the politicians' decision will only be known in the future.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Official on Abu-Marzuq, Dialogue With PA

TA2005172596 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 18 May 96 p 15

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza, AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH — Shaykh Sayyid Abu-Musamih, a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader, has described the intention to extradite Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq, head of the Hamas Political Bureau, to Israel as a dangerous and unjust decision against the Palestinian people and the Arab and Islamic nation as well as a direct offense to one of the Islamic and national symbols. Abu-Musamih added that this decision is decisive evidence of the U.S. bias toward the Israeli side. [passage omitted]

Regarding Hamas' current relations with the Palestinian Authority [PA], Shaykh Abu-Musamih said: We hope that the dialogue will take its proper course in order to emerge from the impasse from which the Palestinian people are suffering as a result of Israeli arrogance and aggressions in the region. Israel always strives and does its utmost to sow sedition in the Palestinian street, but the Palestinian people are one unit.

Abu-Musamih affirmed that contacts between Hamas and the PA are continuing in order to arrive at solutions that realize the Palestinian people's interest and satisfy all the parties in the Palestinian arena.

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Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Denies Closure of Khartoum Office

TA2005150396 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 17 May 96 p 7

["Exclusive" to AL-QUDS]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, INTERMEDIA — Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] sources in Amman said that the movement has not closed its offices in Khartoum, nor has it received a request from the Sudanese authorities in this regard.

Hamas cited engineer Munir Sa'id, its representative in Khartoum, as saying that the removal of the signs pointing to the office of the al-Aqsa Information Center was aimed at easing any pressure that this might have placed on Sudan.

Hamas affirmed that the center is carrying out its activities in Sudan in a normal manner and has not been subjected to any restrictions. It added that the center is delivering its message in a manner compatible with the laws of Sudan and is not pursuing any other activities deviating from the information and mobilization framework.

The movement said that its representative in Sudan resides there in an official manner and that Hamas is not a movement of the Egyptian or any other leadership in the region but fulfills its anti-Israel role alone.

Palestinian Affairs: Daily Views Hamas 'Differences'

JN2005181196 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 20 May 96 pp 26, 22

["Exclusive" report by Mazin Sa'adah in Palestine]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] spokesman in Palestine, refused to comment on the movement's statement distributed in response to the statements [made by al-Zahhar] on 18 May, or on the statement made by Ibrahim Ghawshah, Hamas representative outside the occupied territory.

Al-Zahhar said: I will not respond to these vituperations. Let them say whatever they want. He reiterated his stand, calling on the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions, the military wing of Hamas, to stop its military operations during the next few days, on the eve of the Israeli elections. Al-Zahhar said: We are not a party to the Israeli game. Any action could be considered an intervention in the interest of one party against another. We are not interested in such an intervention. For this reason, I called on the al-Qassam Battalions to stop its military operations. He added: Both parties, the Likud and Labor, are the cause of the tragedy of the Palestinian people.

Al-Zahhar stressed that he preferred that Hamas not intervene in the process like U.S. President Bill Clinton, who used all his influence in favor of Peres. He said: We do not want to act like them.

Asked if the statements and counterstatements that were made over the past two days, are a sign of separation between Hamas inside Palestine and Hamas outside, al-Zahhar said: It is up to you to decide that.

Al-Zahhar called for resuming the dialogue between the Palestinian National Authority and Hamas to draft fraternal relations based on firm, clear, and comprehensive grounds.

Ghawshah said al-Zahhar's statements do not represent the stand of Hamas and that they are an expression of al-Zahhar's longstanding positions. Ghawshah added that these are personal stands that are not binding on Hamas or the al-Qassam Battalions.

Informed Palestinian sources said that this reveals the existence of two stands inside Hamas and that these stands are being openly expressed by Hamas leaders inside, such as al-Zahhar, and Hamas leaders outside, such as Ghawshah. The sources added that this is the first time differences have surfaced in the wake of the statements which were made last week by Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq, who is currently under arrest in the United States. Abu-Marzuq's statements shed light on the differences over essential issues, not only regarding carrying out suicide operations before the Israeli election, but also over other issues, such as the movement's nonparticipation in the Palestinian presidential and Legislative Council elections where were held on 20 January. Abu-Marzuq said in his statements which were reported by world media last week that Hamas made a mistake by not participating in the elections.

Palestinian sources that are well informed with what goes on in the Hamas Movement say that such statements are significant, as they indicate that there have been major differences within the movement for over a year. These differences are not just between the Hamas leadership in the occupied territories and the leadership abroad, but also among the members of the Hamas leadership abroad. Some of these members support the positions of the Hamas leadership in the occupied territories and demand that it be given more powers in defining the movement's political approach and tactics in accordance with the situation on the ground. They also call for abandoning the approach of dictating policies which gives

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rise to tactics that embarrass the leadership in the territories and are not in harmony with the circumstances they experience.

According to Hamas sources which requested anonymity, differences between the leadership in the occupied territories and abroad revolve around the position toward the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], and consequently on participation in PNA bodies and activities. Last week, the Islamic Salvation Party [ISP], which is very close to Hamas, announced its readiness to participate in the new Palestinian cabinet.

The Hamas leadership in the occupied territories demands that it should have a bigger say in political and practical decisions. The movement's leadership abroad, however, insists that it should keep the decisionmaking process in its own hands, taking advantage of the fact that it is in control of the movement's financial resources. This was pointed out by the movement's statement on Saturday, 18 May, when it stated that "brother Mahmud al-Zahhar was never the official spokesman of Hamas, and therefore his statements do not express the movement's official position, which should only be expressed in official statements or by the movement's spokesman."

Other differences within the movement deal with the issue of dialogue with the PNA. During the festival of solidarity with Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq in the Gaza Strip, some of the movement's figures — namely, Ahmad Bahr and al-Zahhar, declared that they welcome dialogue with the Palestinian Authority and that they are ready to resume this dialogue. However, the Hamas statement, as well as statements by the Hamas official spokesman abroad, assailed the Palestinian Authority. According to some observers, this shows that the gap between the movement's leadership in the occupied territories and abroad is widening, particularly that the movement's leadership abroad does not take into account the circumstances and conditions of the leadership in the occupied territories which has reached new political convictions, as represented by the ISP, in light of the many developments and facts it daily encounters on the ground.

Palestinian Affairs: INSP Initiative Seeks To Launch PA-Hamas Dialogue

TA2105144296 Ramallah AL-BILAD in Arabic 20 May 96 p 1

[Report by Mahir Farraj]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, AL-BILAD — A member of the political bureau of the Islamic National Salvation Party [INSP] has stressed that the party's initiative to launch a dialogue between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], announced at the rally of solidarity with Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq, was based on the homeland's interest, the unity of rank, and the development of society.

In an exclusive statement to AL-BILAD, Shaykh Ahmad Bahr explained that the INSP prepared the initiative in its general outlines and that it is now almost complete. Moreover, the INSP is holding intensive contacts with PA officials and Hamas leaders to set a definite date for launching a detailed discussion and dialogue between the two sides. Shaykh Bahr attributed the delay of the discussions to the PA's preoccupation with the Legislative Council meetings and the formation of the new government.

Palestinian Affairs: INSP Condemns U.S. Decision To Extradite Abu-Marzuq

TA2005170996 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 17 May 96 p 2

[Report by Ahmad al-Nakhalah and Ra'id Lafi]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza, AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH — The Islamic National Salvation Party [INSP] has vehemently condemned the U.S. decision to extradite Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq to Israel. The INSP considered this stance to be political and hostile to the Palestinian people, a flagrant offense against one of their national and Islamic symbols, a direct challenge to the Palestinian Authority [PA], and completely biased toward the Israeli Government and its sovereignty.

Moreover, in its statement issued yesterday in Gaza, the INSP held the U.S. Government totally responsible for the consequences of this decision. It called on the United States to immediately release Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq. The INSP statement lauded President 'Arafat's position that calls for the adoption of this issue, and urged him to intensify international and local pressure in order to secure Abu-Marzuq's release.

In a related development, the Palestinian Islamic Front condemned the decision. The front's secretary general, Shaykh Salih 'Abd-al-'Al, stressed that the U.S. Administration's implementation of this decision and the extradition of Abu-Marzuq, head of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] Political Bureau, to Israel will be tantamount to a declaration of war against the entire Palestinian people, including the PA.

The front called on the U.S. Government to lay down the foundations of a just and comprehensive peace instead of sowing the seeds of sedition and discord. [passage omitted]

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Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Contacts Mubarak on Expulsion of Palestinians

TA2005165496 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 19 May 96 pp 1, 15

[Report by 'Abd-al-Razzaq Abu-Jazar]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza, AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH — Hasan 'Asfur, head of the negotiations department, has said that President Yasir 'Arafat is holding direct contacts with the Egyptian leadership, headed by President Husni Mubarak and Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, to prevent the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians from Libya. He added that so far Egyptian officials have succeeded in deterring this policy. He expressed the hope that this noble role would continue in order to prevent this unjust act against our people, especially at this critical political stage in which our people are drawing up their future identity.

'Asfur affirmed to AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH that President 'Arafat has several times raised the issue of the refugees in al-Sallum in his meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. The latter promised to solve this problem after the Israeli elections. 'Asfur added that the continued expulsion of Palestinians from Libya under these circumstances is not a pan-Arab act and serves neither pan-Arabism nor the Palestinian people. He considered expulsion as collective punishment stemming from a political stance. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Performs Friday Prayers in al-Birah Mosque

JN1705135396 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 17 May 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat performed Friday prayers at al-'Ayn Mosque in al-Birah city today. Performing prayers along with the president were al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the presidency, a number of ministers, and senior military and political officials.

The mosque's preacher focused in his sermon on the lessons that can be drawn from the holy migration of the prophet [from Mecca to Medina]. He called for making use from these lessons, noting the beginning of the Palestinians' return from the diaspora to the homeland.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Adviser Welcomes Iraqi-UN Oil-for-Food Agreement

JN2105094696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 21 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to President Yasir 'Arafat, welcomed the oil-for-food agreement signed between Iraq and the United Nations. Abu-Rudaynah said he hopes that this agreement will alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people and that calm and peace will be restored to the whole region.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Abbas on Taba Talks, Palestinian Goals

NC2005175096 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 13 May 96 p 6

[Interview with Mahmud 'Abbas, head of the Palestinian delegation to the Taba talks, by Tariq Hasan, in Gaza; date not given]

[Hasan] What is the truth about a statement by an Israeli source that Israel asked you to refrain from any mention of Security Council Resolution 194 on the return of Palestinian refugees in your speech at the opening session in the final-status talks held in Taba recently?

['Abbas] I do not know who said this and do not want to comment on an unclear remark by an unknown official. We expressed our views and you may have noticed that there were many differences between our statement and theirs. Why should we explain that we only differed over Resolution 194 when we differed over more than one point? They said that Jerusalem is the unified capital of Israel, and we said that East Jerusalem is our capital. Why should we complicate the negotiations if we were not in disagreement? When we began our negotiations in Taba, it was well known that there were points of disagreement between us. Every party is free to say what he wants. Had they asked us to refrain from saying anything, we would not have agreed. They could, for instance, have asked us to refrain from mentioning the issue of Jerusalem in our speech, and we could have asked them to do the same — and thus we would not agree on anything.

[Hasan] Negotiations usually begin with general issues. Why did you raise the issue of East Jerusalem right from the start?

['Abbas] I mentioned the territories occupied since 1967. I also said that we aspire to an independent state. This is our right, is in line with the principle of self-determination, and does not violate international legitimacy. We emphasized that Jerusalem is part of the territories occupied in 1967 only to remind people that

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it is part of the occupied territories and that we want this part to be our capital.

[Hasan] At the end of the Taba talks you agreed that the final talks must inevitably lead to implementing UN Resolution 242, but this resolution does not mention establishing a Palestinian state.

['Abbas] This is true, but the resolution mentions withdrawal. We are in agreement with the Israelis on reaching a final solution. What will this solution be? Could it be reoccupation for instance? It will enivitably involve arriving at self-determination. When we speak of Jerusalem, refugees, borders, relations with neighbors, and general security arrangemnts, this means the existence of two independent entities, separate from one another. Uri Savir, head of the Israeli delegation to the Taba talks, spoke of separation in his speech at the opening session. We think separation means an independent state, not annexation to Israel.

[Hasan] You decided to begin negotiations with Israel with Resolution 242, which stipulates Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, but the Israeli government has stated more than once that it will not return to the 1967 borders.

['Abbas] Their position is not to return to the 1967 borders, but our position is complete Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders. We have precedents: They withdrew from Egypt to the 1967 borders, and did the same with Jordan. They declare the same stance regarding the Syrian Golan Heights and say they will withdraw from Lebanon in accordance with Resolution 425 — so why should international legitimacy be applied to these parties and not to us? We will not accept this.

[Hasan] The speech by the head of the Israeli delegation to the Taba talks did not touch on the matter of the borders on the River Jordan, which Israel has already declared it will keep. Is this a sign of flexibility in Israel's position, or had he not revealed all his cards from the start?

['Abbas] We regard the Palestinian areas on the River Jordan as our borders and not theirs. Israel's border runs from Bet She'an to Tiberias in the north and from the Dead Sea to the Bet She'an border. These areas on the River Jordan are the Palestinian political and geographic borders.

[Hasan] How do you view Egypt's call to end the final negotiations with Israel within one or two years, instead of three. Could this possibly be done?

['Abbas] The Egyptian call is a very good one, and shows a sincere desire to reach a political solution. We fully agree on concluding the final negotiations in one year. What is there to prevent us from doing so? Anyhow, the matter concerns us and the Israelis. If they are ready for the solution and to resolve pending issues, then it is possible to reach a solution in less than a year. The Egyptian call is aimed at making the two sides move quickly and reach a solution. It is a good, blessed call.

[Hasan] Uri Savir spoke in Taba of the possibility of establishing an Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian trade triangle — but without referring to the political relations between the three parties. Is this in line with Israel's concepts that advance the notion of a confederation based on inequality, in which the Palestinian party will be the junior party?

['Abbas] We will not agree to be an unequal party if there is a partnership. We are partners in everything and on equal footing. If the talk is about tripartite economic cooperation, then this is acceptable. But we also have another tripartite economic cooperation in the region — by which I mean Gaza. This is the Egyptian-Palestinian-Israeli cooperation. That is what you are thinking about. As for the confederation, we always say without argument that we are ready for a bilateral confederation with Jordan. According to international definition, confederation is a contract agreement between two independent entities. We are ready to seek it on this basis.

[Hasan] Israel rejected the direct participation of the peace process sponsors in the opening session of the Taba talks on the final solution. Will this have an effect on the nature of these countries' roles with you during the negotiations and the expected solutions?

['Abbas] We greatly desire the constant participation of the U.S. and Russian sponsors in all the talks between ourselves and the Israelis. We also called for the presence of the European Union and Japan. We are eager to have the sponsor countries present at every meeting.

[Hasan] The final solution negotiations are complicated and long. The balance of power is in Israel's favor. What are you relying on?

['Abbas] We are the basis for peace in the Middle East. Without us there is no peace. That's what we have. We have our people and resources. The Arab world and the world at large are with us. We began from point zero, as refugees, and were supported by the Arab world, then by the Islamic world, and then by the entire world. I know that the military balance is in Israel's favor. But the Israelis are also well aware that if they want real peace, then this should be with the Palestinians. Hence, the Palestinian people must obtain their rights. There

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will be no peace in the Middle East if such a peace is not comprehensive and just.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP Rejects Participation in Government

TA2005165696 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 19 May 96 p 7

[Report by 'Imad al-Ifranji]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza — Jamil al-Majdalawi, member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] Political Bureau, has affirmed the PFLP's rejection of a proposal to participate in the new Palestinian Government — this, in conformity with the PFLP political stance which opposes and rejects the Oslo agreements.

Al-Majdalawi, who recently returned to the homeland, stressed that it is difficult for the PFLP to be a partner in the ministries at such a political period.

With regard to the PFLP's participation in the PLO Executive Committee, which is the Palestinian Government's reference point, al-Majdalawi said that the Executive Committee is a body stemming from the Palestine National Council and that it represents the entire Palestinian people. He said: We believe that it is our duty to epitomize our people's unity within the framework represented by the PLO.

Palestinian Affairs: Joint Meeting With Israel on Gaza Airport Ends

JN1905193396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Palestinian-Israeli meeting was concluded in Jerusalem this evening. The meeting focused on the issue of Gaza International Airport. Mahmud 'Abbas, Abu-Mazin, headed the Palestinian side while Uri Savir, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, headed the Israeli side.

Abu-Mazin described the meeting as important. He said that an agreement was reached on a set of points, noting that differences continued between the two sides on other points without giving details. He said that talks on this issue will resume during the next two days.

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Algeria

Algeria: Politicians React to Zeroual's Proposed Reforms

LD1805231996 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The partners to the national dialogue have now only one week left to think over the proposals sent to them last Saturday [11 May] by the presidency of the republic and reply in writing. [passage omitted]

The Ettahadi Movement had said that opening the memorandum to a general debate was positive. The movement's Executive Committee expressed its belief that the text of the memorandum deserved political discussions to examine fundamental matters which were crucial to the country.

For his part Mourredine Boukrouh, the leader of the Party of Algerian Renewal, had said that the memorandum contained proposals which went beyond the demands of his party and that the new constitution would enable his party to sign the birth of the second republic.

The leader of the Ailiance of Student Renewal [tahaluf al-tajdid al-tullabi] had expressed his satisfaction with the inclusion of the youth element in the political debate. He added that President Liamine Zeroual had drawn up the outlines in anticipation of the future of the political life. [sentence as heard]

Bouguerra Mustapha, the man in charge of the political structure of the Islamic Ennahda Movement, today told the Algerian news agency that the presidential memorandum included several positive aspects. He said that the Ennahda Movement believed that the amendment of the constitution was not one of the priorities at the moment. He added that the objectives expected from the proposed constitutional amendment could be achieved through an agreement over principles adopted by the forthcoming national conference and also through the amendment of the laws on political parties and the elections until the constitution is amended by a legislative power.

Mustapha also said that the Ennahda Movement proposed the addition of two main points to the memorandum. The first one concerns an end to the bloodshed and the second is about the guarantees which should be offered to the parties and the media with a view to holding clean, pluralistic, and democratic elections.

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak Reportedly To Ask al-Asad To Join Amman Summit

JN2105104196 Dubayy AL-BAYAN in Arabic 19 May 96 pp 1, 15

[Report by Khalil Khurmah and Walid Zahr-al-Din in Amman and Beirut]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A ranking Jordanian official told AL-BAYAN that Syria informed Egypt of its agreement on holding an expanded Arab summit, but it refused to participate in the tripartite summit that will be held in Amman during the first week of June. The Jordanian official added that Egypt saw positive signs in the Syrian stand. These signs have opened the way for Egyptian President Husni Mubarak to visit Syria in the next few days or for him to send his foreign minister, 'Amr Musa, to Damascus.

The Jordanian official noted that Egypt wants to salvage the peace process by reviving the cordon states grouping and to expand next month's Amman summit by including Syria. According to the Jordanian official, Syria believes it has no interest in participating in this grouping. Damascus informed Cairo that it will not join any Arab grouping to which Jordan is a party, the official added.

The Jordanian official added that the Egyptian president intends to visit Damascus or dispatch his foreign minister to brief Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad on the results of the Cairo tripartite summit, as well as to try to convince him to participate in a five-way summit that will include Syria and Lebanon in addition to the three parties that are already scheduled to attend the Amman summit.

The Jordanian official said that Egypt considers such a five-way summit in Amman a step toward an expanded Arab summit within the framework of the Egyptian efforts to close Arab ranks and tackle the issue of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East based on a unified Arab position to confront Israeli intransigence and support the stand of the Arab negotiators on the Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian tracks. This Egyptian move also comes at a time when the ongoing efforts to produce a mechanism to monitor the cease-fire in southern Lebanon face Israeli intransigence, a conflict between American and French views, and a weak Arab role. [passage omitted]

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Egypt: Mubarak Phones Yemen's Salih on Agreement With Eritrea

NC1905061796 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak telephoned Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih yesterday evening. They discussed the agreement reached between Eritrea and Yemen on resorting to international arbitration concerning the dispute over the Red Sea islands of Hunaysh.

Egypt: Official Comments on Iran's Statements on Improving Ties

NC2005205796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1910 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 May (MENA)—Commenting on Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's statement on improving Egyptian-Iranian relations, Ambassador 'Adil al-Safti, first under secretary of the foreign ministry, said: It is not a matter of mere talk. He noted that Iran has repeatedly expressed its desire to improve relations with Egypt and added that words should be accompanied by deeds and that there should be real actions to show this.

In response to questions from correspondents, al-Safti said: Relations could in fact improve if Iran has good intentions.

Regarding the visit by an Egyptian trade delegation from the private sector to Iraq, he said the visit was arranged several months ago and is part of discussions on trade exchange, particularly of goods that are not subject to the sanctions imposed by the UN on Iraq. He added that Egypt does not hide its desire to alleviate and completely end the Iraqi people's sufferings.

Regarding the Singaporean foreign minister's visit to Egypt, Ambassador al-Safti said that he will meet with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa to discuss bilateral ties and that a number of agreements will be signed during the visit.

Egypt: Prime Minister Outlines Reform Plans

MS2005083196 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 20 May 96 p VI

[Interview with Egyptian Prime Minster Kamal al-Janzuri by David Gardner and James Whittington; date and place not given; from the FINANCIAL TIMES Survey]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Question — The hallmark of your premiership is a new commitment to structural reform. Why should the outside world believe things are going to happen now?

Answer — Let's look at the last 15 years. From 1981-91 we established the main infrastructure — electricity, telecommunications, housing, transportation, and so on — without which it's impossible to talk about growth and inviting the private sector to work. We spent almost $50bn on this.

From 1991-95 we got financial discipline. We cut the budget deficit, cut the inflation rate, and freed the exchange rate. Right now we're on the third phase which is about raising growth to five, six and seven per cent in real terms, creating 450,000 new jobs each year, and raising the standard of living and improving social services in education, health and so on... To do all this we need to open our door for private sector and create confidence and a better climate.

Question — Central-to your reforms will be privatisation. Are you more committed to this than before?

Answer — Frankly 3 years ago I thought, why not keep the public sector ... and the private sector can come and invest in any activity. Right now I find it very hard to invite the private sector to work while we have this big pyramid of public enterprises. I've told parliament and the labour force that we as government are going for privatisation to the end and we are serious about this. I hope that at least eight companies will sell a majority stake from now until the end of June. I can't tell you which but I want you to know we are very, very serious.

Question — How will policies such as privatisation and trade liberalisation effect your tight targets on the budget?

Answer — We'll keep the budget deficit the same by balancing cuts on revenue with cuts from expenditure. We have already accepted to cut the ceiling on customs tariffs and we're looking at expenditures to counterbalance this. Also by selling public enterprises we will bring money to the budget which we can use to bring down our domestic debt. A quarter of our budget expenditures goes to [service] the debt burden.

Question — What economic achievements do you hope to present at the Middle East and North Africa economic conference in Cairo in November?

Answer — It's too late to wait to November to say we'll do so and so. We have to show something. This is why I'm accelerating the process of privatisation and each day I follow up personally any problem which is [hindering] projects. I call specific governors three or four times to follow up specific problems. I hope that by the time we reach November we can show we already have projects in steel, fertilisers, cement, textiles and so on.

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Question — What about a new agreement with the International Monetary Fund?

Answer — I am optimistic about our talks with the IMF... its moving better than it was three months ago.

Question — And a partnership agreement with the European Union?

Answer — For the Europeans to have a good market they need good economy in the countries [they are negotiating with]. I tell my colleagues it's not a matter of getting some grant or soft loan... its not a trade bargain, its a package for both sides...To help developing countries you have to find some projects which won't hurt our progress but will expand the market. If I was on the other side, it would be short-sighted to just think of opening up the market as in two or three years these countries might not be able to buy what you export to them.

Question — Why should a foreign investor come to Egypt?

Answer — I'm trying to tell all my colleagues to have a new mentality with. investors. There are some who [still] believe that investors are coming to steal from us or their patience is limitless... It is very hard to be in my position and to know that last year we got foreign investment of $400m while in Indonesia — I don't think they have more potential than Egypt — they got $40bn. We have to speed up [our reforms] to be eligible to ask foreign investors to come in.

Question — Why does your government insist on shutting out the Moslem Brotherhood and branding them as terrorists? What is wrong with including them in the political system?

Answer — Its not a matter of democracy... whenever you leave them they talk about democracy but when they reach [the top] it will be the end — one hundred per cent dictatorship... If you look at their history it shows that in 1948, 1954 and 1964 they had military groups... They have tried to isolate themselves since and say they are against them but we know that there are links... Believe me, their roots are very fragmented politically. We left them to offer some small services in schools and hospitals but everyone now knows why they did that. For democracy; keep those people outside the whole issue.

Egypt: Prime Minister, Ministers Address Parliament on 1996-97 Budget

NC2005161596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri has stated that the state is on the right track as far as its draft budget and development plan for the year 1996-97 are concerned. He noted that the investment funds in the development plan amount to 17 percent of the national income, and we hope they will reach 25-30 percent.

Explaining the government statement on the state's socioeconomic development plan for the year 1996-97, Dr. al-Janzuri said: We seek to rely on ourselves and to stay away from borrowing. He noted that social considerations are manifest in the draft state budget and development plan, where wages amount to 22.8 billion pounds or 35 percent of total revenues, which amount to 65 billion pounds.

In a statement he delivered before the People's Assembly today, Dr. al-Janzuri added that the funds that provide social benefits and are allocated for the sectors of education, health, culture, youth, and social services amount to 27 billion pounds, which represent 42 percent [of total revenues].

For his part, Finance Minister Dr. Muhiy-al-Din al-Gharib reviewed the state's draft budget for the fiscal year 1996-97 before the People's Assembly today. He stressed that the proposed budget aims to maintain the continuity of the state's role of safeguarding social considerations and protecting the low-income population. He added that the draft budget includes approximately 27 billion pounds earmarked for social services; 16.2 billion for education, health, and cultural services; and 6.8 billion pounds to bolster insurance systems.

Dr. Zafir al-Bishri, minister of state for planning, has announced that the socioeconomic development plan for the year 1996-97 seeks to: increase the rate of growth of the Gross Domestic Product to approximately three times the population growth rate, broaden the ownership base in the public enterprise companies, augment the role of the private and cooperative sectors, and tackle the problem of unemployment. Dr. al-Bishri added that investments in the 1996-97 plan will amount to 44.04 billion pounds, including 17.02 billion pounds for the government and the public enterprise sector and 27.02 billion pounds for the private and cooperative sectors.

The People's Assembly, presided over by Speaker Dr. Fathi Surur, has decided to refer the draft budget and development plans and the statements of the prime minister, finance minister, and minister of state for planning

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to the Assembly's Budget and Planning Committee, so that the committee can prepare a comprehensive report on them and submit it to the Assembly at future sessions.

Egypt: Brotherhood's al-Hudaybi on 'Unconstitutional' Trials

MM2005143696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 18 May 96 p 7

[Report on interview with Councilor Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, deputy supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood by unidentified correspondent in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, AL-HAYAH — Councilor Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, deputy supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is proscribed in Egypt, has appealed to the Constitutional Court to speed up its hearing of the case raised by a number of Brotherhood leaders, including Dr. 'Isam al-'Aryan and Dr. 'Abd-al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh, in which they claimed that Paragraph 2 of Article 6 of the Military Courts Ordinance which permits the referral of civilians for trial by military courts is unconstitutional.

In an interview with AL-HAYAH, al-Hudaybi said: "Last year the government referred 82 Brotherhood members to military courts, which is completely incompatible with the Constitution, which provides that citizens should be tried by their natural courts. The military court passed custodial sentences on 54 people who are still awaiting the Constitutional Court's decision on the cases they raised against their trial by a military court; they are hoping for the speedy consideration of their cases by the Constitutional Court because any delay in ruling on their cases will mean prolonging their serving of the sentences imposed on them by the military court."

Al-Hudaybi said that the rejection by 13 other Brotherhood leaders — who had been referred to the military court and who included Engineer Abu al-'Ula Madi, representative of the founders of the al-Wasat Party — of the formation of a defense panel to defend them before the military court is "compatible with the position taken by al-'Aryan, Abu al-Futuh, and their colleagues."

Al-Hudaybi pointed out that the defense panel abandoned its task of defending al-'Aryan and Abu al-Futuh before the military court "since it could not pursue its task due to the military court's refusal to respond to legal and constitutional demands made by members of the panel."

He added: "The case is a political one in the first instance and lacks all evidence that any of the accused had committed any unlawful acts. The fact that they were referred to the military court even before they were investigated by the public prosecutor's office provides an indication of this. It does not matter whether there is a defense panel or not to defend them, for the government does what it likes."

Al-Hudaybi said that the government "does not want to hear any voice other than its own." He added: "When Khalid Ibrahim, commander of the Islamic Group, announced an initiative to stop all acts of violence unilaterally, an initiative which was championed by lawyer Muntasir al-Zayyat, we read in the ruling party's newspaper that the initiative had been rejected. But is it logical for anyone to reject the cessation of violence? The government should have encouraged those who put forward the initiative to continue with it, particularly as the holding of dialogue between the government and the groups was not mentioned as being part of the initiative. But the matter became one of aloofness and refusal to accept any role or opinion from anyone outside the government."

Commenting on the refusal by the Committee on Partisan Affairs to grant a license to the al-Wasat Party to carry out its political activities, al-Hudaybi said: From the outset, we said that that party has nothing to do with the Muslim Brotherhood and does not represent a cover behind which the Brotherhood would hide to carry out political activity. If we felt conditions were favorable for the formation of a party, we would have submitted an application and placed on it the names of the Brotherhood leaders among the founders of such a party. All that happened was that an initiative was taken by a number of young people from the Brotherhood and others, including some Copts, to form a party. The committee's rejection was expected because it has become a committee for rejecting parties. From its establishment in 1979 to this day, the committee has not approved the establishment of one single party. All the parties now operating in the arena were established by either a government decision or a judicial decision, as though Egypt with its ulema and politicians and the hundreds of cultural institutions spread throughout it have failed to establish one single political party that meets with the approval of the Committee on Parties."

Al-Hudaybi expressed his astonishment at some government statements that were issued prior to the announcement by the Committee on Parties Affairs of its decision to reject the al-Wasat Party's application and said: "Some responsible officials have stated that the Brotherhood is resorting to trickery in an attempt to establish a party while others described the presence of Copts among the founding members of the al-Wasat Party as merely decorative. Before the committee announced its

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decision, the latter group [unspecified] was arrested and referred to the military court.

"All these acts constitute flagrant government interference. We do not know the reason behind the escalation of the campaign against the Brotherhood at various intervals. Last year, we said they sought by their campaigns to prevent the Brotherhood from participating in the People's Assembly elections. We can think of no reason behind the recent campaign, unless it has been waged because the date of the municipal elections, which the Brotherhood announced it will contest, is drawing near."

Egypt: Ulema Front To Challenge Ministry Control of Preachers

LD2005110296 Tehran IRNA in English 1002 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, May 20, IRNA — The Ulema Front of al-Azhar in Cairo has decided to challenge in court the decision by the Awqaf (religious endowment) Ministry to restrict preaching and sermons in mosques in Egypt only to those preachers appointed by the Awqaf Ministry. The al-Azhar ulema will also question the exclusive right of the Awqaf Ministry to build and establish new mosques and Islamic societies and ban others from doing it.

Dr. Yahya Isma'il, general secretary of the Ulema Front, told Arab weekly paper AL-MUSLIMUN that they have selected leading lawyers, including Muhammad Salim al-'Awa, to file the case in court. He said the Awqaf Ministry's decision means a large number of qualified preachers (khatib) will be denied to carry out their religious duty on the pretext that they have not been appointed by the ministry.

The new awqaf regulations mean that professors and scholars of al-Azhar and other Islamic faculties and colleges who are not working for awqaf will be banned from preaching. Regarding the decision to restrict the establishment of mosques and Islamic societies to the Awqaf Ministry only, Yahya Isma'il said since the time Islam entered Egypt it was the people who built mosques and the state never interfered except in a few cases to build large mosques.

He explained that the state was not in a position to build mosques and Islamic societies at a fast rate to cope with the growth of the population.

Yahya Isma'il stressed that the awqaf's decision violated the country's constitution which stipulates that al-Azhar is responsible for all matters concerning Islam in Egypt. He said that preventing the ulema and Islamic scholars from performing their religiuous duty to preach to the people constituted a crime against shari'ah.

The new awqaf minister, Hamdi Zakzuk, has said that his top priority is to bring all mosques in Egypt under the control of his ministry.

Egypt: Paper Comments on Ties to U.S.

NC1905212896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2043 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 May (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AKHBAR stresses that Egypt's relations with the United States are based on friendship and cooperation, not subservience. It says pro-Zionist media try to exaggerate any differences in views between Egypt and the United States, even though they know that ties between the two countries are based on mutual respect and that this does not keep either of them from criticizing the other's policies.

In its editorial on Monday [20 May], the paper notes recent statements made in Washington by Dr. Usamah al-Baz, foreign ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs. Al-Baz asserted in his statements that the United States is a friend of Egypt's and that Egypt is cooperating with the United States in numerous spheres. But this, he added, does not preclude the fact that differences in views are natural. Al-Baz said the relationship is not one between two sides one of which receives and the other of which gives; rather, it is a relationship of political, military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural cooperation.

The paper says those who think Egypt would submit and accept anyone's dictating a policy to it are deluding themselves. The paper notes that Egypt's action will be governed by its positions and values.

Egypt: U.S. Attitude Toward Libya Seen as 'Not Objective'

NC1905061596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0510 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 May (MENA) — AL-JUMHURIYAH writes that the U.S. insistence on accusing the Libyan Jamahiriyah of building a chemical weapons complex in Tarhunah is not objective. It describes the American position in this connection as bizarre because it demands the elimination of something that does not exist and seeks to prove a lie that the United States promoted.

In an editorial today, AL-JUMHURIYAH says that the U.S. position on the issue of the Tarhunah plant in Libya reveals the attitude Washington has assumed in the past few years when it flexed its muscles at and threatened

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whoever tried to oppose its will or refused to submit unconditionally to all its terms.

The paper stresses that the U.S. attitude toward Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon lacks objectivity and reveals a outright hostility toward Arabs and a complete bias toward Israel.

AL-JUMHURIYAH urges the United States to reevaluate this, pointing out that it is not in its interest to be blindly biased against Arabs when it enjoys a prominent status in many Arab countries.

Egypt: Article Calls For Review of Stand Toward U.S., Israel

NC2005165496 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 13 May 96 p 1

[Article by Chief Editor Jamal Badawi: "Egypt's Marginal Role"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The tripartite summit involving Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian National Authority was held at one of the worst times for the Arabs since the Palestine disaster. The summit was held while Israel was raining shells and missiles on Lebanon's Arabs and with the moaning of the injured, dead, and displaced persons and the ruin and destruction of south Lebanon in the background.

The summit was held under the shadow of unprecedented Arab fragmentation, weakness, and failings that have made the United States disregard these countries, attach no importance to them, or fear any damage to its interests in the region because it is certain that these interests are secure despite the humiliation that has afflicted the Arabs in the past days.

They say that the objective of holding the tripartite summit was to coordinate and prepare for the coming round of negotiations that will start after the Israeli elections at the end of this month. We have only to imagine the nature of these negotiations between unequal parties after the recent massacres exposed the criminal role of the United States. This country has discarded the robe of the neutral partner and put on the robe of the blatant enemy of the Arabs, not only by encouraging the massacres and acts of destruction but also through the strategic alliance that removed the regional borders between Israel and itself and put it into open confrontation with the Arab countries. What is this talk about peace or negotiations after what has happened!! The coming stages of negotiations and agreement will be nearer to deals between a party that orders and a party that submits.

What concerns us about all this clamor is Egypt's official stand in its capacity as the Arabs' big brother, the heart and mind of all the Arabs, and the example they follow in war and peace. The United States robbed Egypt of its leadership of the Arab world when Egypt entered the (tent) of peace. It ended Egypt's role in the Arab world to the extent that it has become a marginal one. When the U.S. Administration managed the massacres in south Lebanon, it did not think of the consequences for Egypt as it watched what was happening and then remained silent!! What Israel wanted was achieved, namely removing Egypt from the arena so as to isolate the Arab countries one after the other until Egypt's turn comes. But then it will be too late for it and Egypt can only regret its inaction.

The official Egyptian stand on Lebanon's massacres has put Egypt in an embarrassing position. It believed that the barbaric actions committed by Israel in south Lebanon were carried out for electoral purposes!! This explanation and justification could have been accepted had the Israeli election maneuvers been limited to promises and rhetoric. But to go beyond that to the extent of killing and massacring people is something that cannot be explained as electoral maneuverings. This should be unacceptable to Egypt, which has supported the causes of justice in all the tribulations that have befallen the oppressed peoples. So how could we take this stand toward brothers and partners in Arabism and humanity who were subjected to the ugliest acts of oppression at the hands of the Americans and Israelis!!

The official Egyptian stand needs to be reviewed and defined clearly so that Egypt can maintain its position and leadership of the Arab world. We should not squander this position, which we have built over the ages.

Egypt: Paper Warns Against Arab 'Rush' Toward Israel

NC1905210296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2015 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 May (MENA)—The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH warns against a current trend by certain Arab countries, which are consciously or unconsciously trying to rush toward Israel. The paper notes that this trend serves Israel's malicious goal of turning the peace process into a quasi-surrender, to say the least.

In its editorial on Monday [20 May], the paper emphasizes that by creating obstacles to the peace process, and helped in this by the Arabs' rush toward Israel, Israel seeks to maximize gains for the Jewish state at the expense of the entire Arab nation.

The paper notes that Israel's brutal shelling of Lebanese villages and cities and murdering of civilians is the

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truest expression of Israel's concept of peace. This concept, the paper says, seeks to turn the entire peace process into silk-coated capitulation.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi on 'U.S. Military Threat,' Terrorism

LD2005064196 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2007 GMT 19 May 96

[Address by Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi to the "World Economic Order and Arab Development" conference in Benghazi on 19 May—recorded]

[FBIS Summary] An announcer states that the World Economic Order and Arab Development conference has been organized by the Libyan Central Bank, the National Board for Scientific Research, the Arab League Economic Department, the Arab Monetary Fund, the Union of Arab Banks, and the African Development Bank. Al-Qadhdhafi then begins his 101-minute address.

The Libyan leader paints a gloomy picture of capitalist industrial production with emphasis on luxury goods and services. He says that firms manufacture many types of spectacles, cameras, and other goods and that a lot of effort and raw material are involved in the manufacture of luxury goods, while the production of much-needed food is relatively ignored. He says that people in developing countries and advanced economies have equally suffered as a result, and that only the owners have benefitted.

Al-Qadhdhafi gives numerous examples of wasteful production. While stressing that certain goods are essential, he criticizes the consumer attitude generated by the wide selection of different types of commodities available. He says there is a need for a cultural revolution to end the consumerism that dominates the world.

Al-Qadhdhafi talks about resources wasted in packaging and advertising products and how people are made to feel they will be incomplete without certain goods. He says that manufacturers of consumer goods are using good food like eggs to manufacture shampoos, thus depriving people of a good source of nourishment. He provides statistics on deaths caused by malnutrition to demonstrate the need for diverting resources toward food production.

Al-Qadhdhafi continues: Trade agreements and political power are used to create markets for consumer goods, and any resistance to consumerism is branded as terrorism; political leaders' main tasks are to serve the interests of the capitalists.

The Libyan leader criticizes waste in the service industry and the army of unproductive consumers involved in that industry, giving fashion models and photographers as examples. He makes comparisons between per capita income in the developing world and Western countries to demonstrate the unequal distribution of wealth in the world, and a further comparison to demonstrate that a small percentage of the world population controls most of its wealth.

Al-Qadhdhafi continues: "We must not forget military expenditures. This lecture, or intervention, would probably be lacking if we did not mention military expenditures. A big portion of world revenue is taken up by military expenditures. Why? Because peoples are uncertain about their safety.

"In Libya, we save money for an irrigation project. We are threatened that an atomic bomb will be dropped on the irrigation project. Therefore, we should have been thinking about ways of confronting the atomic bomb. We are being forced to think in a military way and abandon agriculture, production, industry, education, health, prosperity, and social services. Our main concern will be how to repulse the attack, how to manufacture an anti-missile missile, and how to protect ourselves from the evil of an atomic attack.

"Who has forced us into this? America, Satan, and imperialist ambitions. We have become terrorists, and we are being indicted, embargoed, and punished while we have been peaceful in our homes. They killed our children. They sentenced the innocent to death and later they announced they were sorry because the equipment they had been using was contaminated and, consequently, all the judgements were wrong. Then return our children whom you killed in 1986.

"Britain has officially announced that its equipment was contaminated [mulawwatha] and consequently, all the tests carried out, including those on the Irish Republican Army — they said a number of the IRA members were innocent and unjustly sentenced. Although Libya is innocent and the timer which Libya had purchased from Switzerland — this turned out to be a lie because the equipment in which they put the timer, which was found in the Pan Am jet that exploded over Lockerbie — it has now been announced that the equipment was contaminated and, consequently, gave incorrect results.

"All the investigations conducted in previous years are now shown to be incorrect because the British equipment was contaminated. Investigations into [the allegation that] a member of the Libyan Embassy in London had fired shots at an English policewoman has shown that this was not true, because the equipment used in the tests in the operation was contaminated, and consequently gave incorrect results. This is exactly the same as using contaminated equipment to test a sample

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of blood from a human being; it will give you the wrong result. It cannot be relied on."

Al-Qadhdhafi then speaks further on testing blood samples, on U.S. military expenditures, pressure on other countries to reduce expenditures on food and education to defend themselves against the U.S. military threat, economic statistics, the service industry, and food production in developing countries.

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi on 'Confrontation' With U.S.

LD1705131296 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1645 GMT 16 May 96

[Address by Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi at an outside location near Darnah — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Brothers: We came here today to unveil the plaque of this monument, which marks the heroic battle fought by our people in this place. We came here to show respect to the souls of our martyrs and salute their offspring. We came here to mark the 1,000th month of the battle of Qarba', the famous and historic Friday battle fought by our people. Today more than ever before, we need to draw lessons from the heroics of our people and contemplate their glorious history.

The battles fought by our Libyan Arab people against injustice, tyranny, world arrogance, and colonialist insolence some 1,000 months ago are like today's battles that have to be fought against arrogance, challenges, provocation, and the unjustified colonialist ambitions facing our people. [passage omitted]

As soon as colonialism sees a vacuum, weakness, or disunity, it comes in. Colonialist ambitions never go away. Today, O brothers, we are facing the same ambitions. Just think of it. One thousand months ago it was the Italian ambitions, today it is the turn of American ambitions. America will not, however, find a vacuum here; it will have to overcome a united front of armed people — people who are ready to fight and defeat America and its allies. [audience applauds] [2-minute break in reception] [passage omitted]

We want to declare to America and America's allies that we are ready to fight and be martyred as our forefathers did, and that we will not surrender to America no matter how powerful it is, no matter how much it tries to terrify us. To hell with America, a thousand times. We speak in the name of the insulted Arab nation, in the name of the threatened Arab nation, in the name of the Arab nation that America wants to put under the feet of the Zionists, under the feet of the Israelis. We speak as Arabs, dear brothers, confronting the Israelis, confronting the Yankees.

Dear brothers, we announce from this place, from the glorious Friday battle that we will repeat those sacrifices, we will repeat those heroics, we will repeat those defeats upon the aggressors, dear brothers. Let America learn from what happened to Italy on this day. Let America learn from what happened to Italy in the battles of Qarba', al-Ruhayba, Marsit, and (al-Qardabiyya). America has to study well the history of Italy, its NATO ally, and consider what happened to the Italian armies on Libyan soil. It has to study well the history of the Libyan people, who were poor, unarmed, illiterate, and nomadic but managed to inflict heavy losses on the tyrannical Italian occupation, which had a similar status as today's America. Fighting lasted dozens of years. What would you make of it today: The Libyan people are trained to carry arms, owns arms, are strong economically, have high morale, and have a general social popular leadership that oversees and leads each and every region.

We would like to use this platform to salute the coordinators of the regions' popular commands, which as a group form the General Social Popular Command of the great Jamahiriyah. The regional Social Popular Command is the historical command of the region because it incorporates all the dynamic forces of the region's inhabitants. It is thanks to this situation that we are in a position to fight the battle, however long it may be. The longer the battle is, the more likely that we will be able to exhaust the enemy, wear it out, and manage to defeat it in the end.

The battle will be fought on our land; the land of our forefathers. We shall be fighting from a position of strength and high morale because we shall be defending the land of our ancestors. Ambitious invaders will be, however, frightened; their legs will be shaking like jelly, like the legs of those before them in this place because they will be mere aggressors fighting on a foreign territory with no cause. [passage omitted]

Brothers: America has repeatedly indicated to us that it will not show mercy for the weak. As far as America is concerned, human rights do not apply to weak people. America does not believe weak people should have any rights at all. People like the Lebanese, Palestinians, and other weak Arab people have no human rights in the American language. This is a fact; the whole world is a witness. America likes to show off its human rights record, but as soon as Arab [illegible]ves are threatened, America does not protest. America does not recognize any rights for weak people; it only recognizes the rights of strong people. [passage omitted]

Following the 1986 raid against us, America realized that any attack on Libya is an expensive business. In

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that attack, America used the weapons of the coward — its long-range missiles. Next time, its losses will be heavier; the battle will be on the ground. America shall lose a ground battle. [passage omitted]

America is a brute colonialist power that does not recognize our rights in our own land. As far as America is concerned, anyone who tries to liberate his land is a terrorist.

However, the criminal Israeli aggressors, who have been killing children and women and occupying other people's land, are in the eyes of America justified and should be bolstered with all means of destruction. This is the reality.

O brothers: It is clear now that we should not expect any peace or understanding with America. It will be very naive on our part if we believe that America, a superpower, will one day be able to tell right from wrong. America labels people who try to liberate their land as terrorists. In the eyes of America, the Israeli invaders are justified.

Today, we have to give our children to be slaughtered for the sake of the American and Israeli elections.

They have asked the world not to blame the terrorist Peres following the slaughter of the Lebanese children. Why? What was the answer? He is about to fight a general election and, therefore, he should be excused. To hell with Peres and his elections! And to hell with America! Why should our children die for the sake of their election?

The rulers of this nation, who have been justifying Israel's atrocities, America's arrogance, and the deaths of hundreds of Arab children, should be damned. May the curse of the martyrs of Qana and Qarba' fall upon them. These rulers are merely the puppets of America and Zionism. I hereby call upon the Arab nation to rise up and annihilate those who have justified the crimes of Zionism and colonialism. I call upon the Arab nation to rise up and eliminate these regimes that have justified those atrocities, the crimes of America and the Israelis against the children of the Arab nation. [passage omitted]

We should draw lessons from our own history in order to avoid further tragedies and spare our people further suffering. In order to face up to this new confrontation, we must rally and form one front. We are facing a great historical challenge. Although this challenge is a serious test for us, we are not as proud of it as we are proud of our people's past confrontations with the superpower, Italy.

Nonetheless, we are proud today of our people's confrontations with empires of injustice and aggression. We are proud of this historical confrontation although it is a test for us. This confrontation will lift our morale and make our life worthwhile. It is a confrontation that will not make us lead a life of sycophancy to Zionism and imperialism. We are facing a serious confrontation with the forces of world arrogance.

We did not, however, choose this confrontation. We did not seek it. This confrontation has been forced upon us by imperialist ambitions seeking to control our gasoline, our waters, our land, and our shores, defeat the Arab nation, and make it once more a nation of slaves obedient to the US-Western household. We did not choose this confrontation; but we have accepted the imposed challenge. Shame on us if we refuse to accept this challenge. We accept the challenge; it is a forced one but so be it. The most important thing is for America to know that every one of us is ready for martyrdom. American should also know that as far as we are concerned, surrendering is completely out of the question. [audience applauds]

Therefore, The Arab Muslim Libyan front should be strong and overcome any kind of problem. There should not be any gap in a united rank.

We are a united rank capable of confrontation, moving forward toward the historical Mediterranean Sea, and defeating any adventurer, mercenary, renegade, or hypocrite. [passage omitted]

Those who try to disrupt these ranks are regarded as a fifth column of the colonialist powers that are confronting us and the forces of arrogance. The anniversary of the Friday battle — during which thousands of Italians were killed and their canons and arms destroyed, and almost 1,000 months after this historical battle — coincides with the holding of the International Islamic Popular Command on Libyan soil, the headquarters of this command.

Brothers: This means that the Islamic nation, from the Caribbean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, represented in the International Islamic Popular Command, came to show its support to you and fight with you at the forefront in Libya, the bastion of jihad, Libya the line of confrontation, Libya which raises the banner of jihad. [passage omitted]

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Sudan

Sudan: Al-Turabi Hails Syria's Resistance to Terrorism Charges

EA1705140896 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Hasan Abdullah al-Turabi, speaker of the National Assembly and leader of the Sudanese delegation to the conference of the Arab Parliamentary Union's council, currently in session in Damascus, has stressed, in a press statement he made outside the conference, the deep relations between Sudan and Syria and their assistance to one another in resisting the terrorism charge against them.

Dr. al-Turabi stressed in his press statement, Sudan's support for the fraternal Lebanese people in confronting occupation and the brutal israeli aggression.

Dr. al-Turabi is expected to put before the conference practical proposals aiming at making Arab parliaments eschew words for action through the Arab Parliamentary Union and the activation of its mechanisms to ensure solidarity and shun conflicts. The Arab parliaments should establish strong relations among themselves.

Sudan: Al-Bashir Holds Talks With Chadian Emissary

EA2105114296 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, the president of the Republic, received Mohammad Senusi Khatir, the Chadian president's emissary and adviser, in his office at the General Command today. Mr. Tahir delivered a letter from the Chadian president to Lt Gen. al-Bashir. The letter deals with bilateral relations and is a follow-up to the resolutions of the recent summit meeting held in Bangui, Central African Republic [CAR], between Sudan, Chad and the CAR. Lt. Gen. al-Bashir briefed the Chadian emissary on the course of events in Sudan particularly in the sphere of politics and the signing of the Peace Charter.

[Paris AFP in English at 1009 GMT on 21 May, in a Khartoum-datelined item, adds the following: "Chad will not implement UN diplomatic sanctions imposed on Sudan for refusing to extradite three Muslim militants, a Chadian envoy said, quoted in the Sudanese daily AL-INGAZ AL-WATANI on Tuesday [21 May]. Chad is 'opposed to the Security Council resolution and to pressures being exerted against Sudan,' said Mohammad Senusi Khatir, the envoy of Chadian President Idriss Deby. 'In view of the intimate relations between our two countries, Chad follows with concern the conspiracy aimed at forcing Sudan to change its political choices,' Khatir said. Khatir met President 'Umar al-Bashir on Monday to deliver a message from Deby on bilateral relations, the paper said. The message also confirmed Chad's participation in a summit between Sudan and Central African leaders to be held in Khartoum at a yet to be decided date, it said."]

Sudan: Foreign Minister, Russian Emissary Discuss Ties

EA2105113096 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha received Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk in his office this afternoon. The two discussed at length the developing relations between the two countries and the possiblity of promoting them in all fields. They also discussed Russia's positive stand during the UN Security Council deliberations.

For his part, Mr. 'Ali Muhammad Taha explained Sudan's position on the issue brought before the UN Security Council. The Russian deputy foreign minister expressed his country's desire to promote relations between the two countries. He stressed that Russia understands Sudan's position and will continue positive consultations between the two countries.

Sudan: SPLA-United's Leader Akol Reacts to Othow's 'Peace Deal'

AB1705210096 London BBC World Service in English 1705 GMT 17 May 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There were reports yesterday that a third southern Sudan rebel leader had signed a deal, accepting the Khartoum government's charter for the south. Already Riak Machar of South Sudan Independence Movement and his ally, Carabino Kuany Bol, had signed it. According to the government, the third man is James Othow. He was described as deputy leader of SPLA-United [Sudanese People's Liberation Army-United] which is led by Lam Akol. It is claimed that he brought in the Shilluk tribe with him, including the Shilluk king who was at the signing ceremony. Well, Lam Akol, himself a Shilluk, called us up to give his reaction. Mary Harper asked him what he made of it all?

[Begin recording] [Akol] That piece of information must be the biggest bad joke for this year, because this man they call my deputy, James Othow, defected from us in November [1995]. He joined the enemy, and since then, the enemy made him the commissioner of Donga Province, and he was also made the commander of

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the Popular Defense Forces, and he joined hands with the government and they have been fighting us in the field since January. Up to now, we are still fighting the enemy forces with James Othow on their side. So, I am surprised now how he turned into my deputy six months after he had defected to the enemy.

[Harper] Never mind about James Othow or whether he is your deputy or not. There were quite a lot of other important Shilluk people there such as the king of the Shilluk, so this detail has got quite a lot of significance.

[Akol] The king of the Shilluk has not signed a peace deal. His position in the society is such that he cannot be partisan. So, I do not believe that he could even sign a peace deal otherwise he would not have been the king of the Shilluk.

[Harper] But with all these peace deals being signed, basically, you and John Garang are being left very much on your own?

[Akol] This is not true, Mary, because if that was the case, everybody would have gone to Khartoum by now. Those who have signed deals are people who have been, you know.... [pause] They got fed up with the struggle — they were struggling with the enemy — and actually I do not call it a peace deal. It is a propaganda stunt by the regime to hoodwink people into believing that there is a peace deal.

[Harper] Aren't you very fed up though? Wouldn't you prefer to go to Khartoun and be treated in some luxury by the government rather than floundering about in southern Sudan?

[Akol] We have never ever, never ever gotten tempted to go to Khartoum, because we know what Khartoum is. It is a rotten regime. It is a regime which is favoring terrorism, exporting it to other countries. This is not the sort of thing you can envy to go [to]. [end recording]

Sudan: 4 Prison Guards Injured in Mutiny by Detained Soldiers

AB1705124396 Paris AFP in French 1143 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 17 May (AFP) — Four Sudanese prison guards were injured yesterday in a mutiny led by some detained soldiers accused of being involved in a coup attempt, the AL-RA'Y AL-AKHAR daily reported today.

According to the newspaper, 95 officers and civilians detained at Ad-Doueim — 200 km south of Khartoum — seized control of the prison and its arms depot, and exchanged fire with the guards, wounding four of them and taking the prison commander hostage.

The police laid siege to the prison, which was still under the control of the mutineers last night, the paper added. No indication of the mutiny has been given from official sources today, which is the weekly day of rest of Sudan, a country with a Muslim majority.

Five regular officers, led by a colonel, three retired officers, an unspecified number of junior officers, and men were arrested for their involvement in a coup attempt on 5 March.

Ghazi Salah Eddin Atabani, secretary general of the People's National Congress (the highest political authority), had at the time said that the officers had wanted to overthrow the government during the 6 March general elections. He had described the attempt as being "very limited," saying that "very few people were arrested and very few were involved."

Sudan: Authorities Ban Distribution of Nongovernmental Newspaper

NC1905095496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0850 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 19 May (MENA)— The Sudanese authorities today banned the distribution of the nongovernmental newspaper AL-RA'Y AL-AKHAR, which was already published and ready for distribution. It is not known yet whether the ban applies to today's issue or to all issues.

In the past two days this newspaper has published reports and analysis that were regarded by observers in Khartoum as a wager on the authority's openmindedness and the margin of freedom available to the press, particularly the nongovernmental press, as a sign of the government's good will toward the various institutions, particularly when it comes to democracy and human rights.

The paper yesterday published an article by one of its prominent writers, who is categorized as being part of the local opposition, in which he strongly criticized the 1989 coup. The writer judged that the government failed in various political, economic, and service fields during its seven-year-long term.

On Friday [17 May], AL-RA'Y AL-AKHAR published an interesting report that military detainees have taken control of a prison, seized a weapons depot inside it, and detained an officer.

This is the third time the newspaper has been suspended.

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Western Sahara

Western Sahara: Polisario Envoy in France Warns of Moroccan Offensive

LD2005224596 Paris Radio France International in French 2130 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] has raised the alarm. It is expecting a large-scale offensive in the Western Sahara. According to Fadel Ismail, the Polisario representative in France, the Moroccan Armed Forces are about to launch an offensive in Western Sahara very soon.

Ismail says that, as soon as the king of Morocco returned from Paris, which he visited earlier this month, he ordered the staff of his Armed Forces to prepare to attack the Saharan forces.

Last weekend Polisario leader Mohamed Abdelaziz said that the resumption of hostilities was likely and imminent in Western Sahara.

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Iraq: Terms of Preliminary Agreement Reportedly Accepted

NC2005145096 Paris AFP in English 1405 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] UNITED NATIONS, May 20 (AFP) — Iraq has accepted the terms of a preliminary agreement with the United Nations enabling Baghdad to resume oil exports in order to purchase humanitarian supplies, diplomatic sources said Monday [20 May]. The sources told AFP at 1330 GMT that the news was received from Baghdad "half an hour ago."

Iraqi chief negotiator 'Abd-al-Amir Al-Anbari would sign the memorandum of understanding at the United Nations later in the day, the sources said.

There was no immediate confirmation from the United Nations. UN spokeswoman Sylvana Foa said that UN Secretary-General Butrus Butrus-Ghali, who met with both al-Anbari and chief UN negotiator Hans Corell at his residence on Sunday, had "got his fingers crossed." "We hope to have something to tell you around noon (1600 GMT)," Foa said.

Baghdad has been under an oil and trade embargo since invading Kuwait in 1990.

If confirmed, the deal would mean the first humanitarian exception to the sanctions which are to remain in force until Iraq complies with tough UN disarmament requirements. The oil-for-food deal, which has been negotiated by the Iraqi and UN teams since February, provides for Iraq to export two billion dollars worth of oil every six months, to raise money for food and medicine to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people hit by the sanctions. The process is to take place under strict UN supervision, and an escrow account is to be opened to control the money raised by the oil sales.

During the final stages of the negotiations, Iraq accused the United States and Great Britain of interfering with the negotiations and of pushing for amendments that would violate the Gulf country's sovereignty. Iraq had until now rejected UN resolution 986, which provides for the oil-for-food arrangement, on the ground that it infringed on Iraqi sovereignty.

Iraq: Baghdad Seeks Assurances of No 'Surprises' on Oil-for-Food Agreement

MM2005140196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 20 May 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Raghidah Dirgham: "Baghdad Accepts Memorandum of Understanding 'if' it Is Final"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] New York — By noon yesterday, Sunday, Baghdad was withholding its final decision regarding the memorandum of understanding on implementation of Resolution 986 pending assurances that what it was being offered constitutes the end of the road as far as conditions are concerned and that there will be no unexpected surprises and new demands and additions. It was thought likely that Baghdad would convey its decision on the memorandum to the UN secretary general later on Sunday [19 May] evening during his meeting with Ambassador 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, or in subsequent telephone contacts with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz.

Speculations range from Baghdad's acceptance of the draft memorandum of understanding reached by the two negotiating delegations Friday, to an Iraqi request for official clarifications and assurances that there will be no change in the proposed offer asking for additional measures by Iraq.

Sources close to the negotiations say that Baghdad "fears surprises in the shape of new attitudes" from the United States and Britain, who had introduced amendments to the 10 April draft memorandum reached by the negotiating delegations of Iraq and the United Nations.

The sources say that Baghdad wants to be certain that what was achieved last Friday is "the final picture of the situation." Therefore, the sources believe that Baghdad is likely to request "official assurances" from the secretary general or the Security Council that "nothing new" lies in wait for Iraq's approval of the memorandum, with more demands. They add that Baghdad has become "used to surprise positions at the last moment," and that it wants "assurances" that that will not happen this time.

While Russia, France, and China stressed that Security Council members should not interfere in the negotiations between the General Secretariat and Iraq following the U.S.-British amendments, nobody would guarantee that the United States and Britain would accept the final draft reached by the two negotiating delegations, but Western sources say that, on the basis of their own understanding of the draft, Washington and London believe it to be suitable. The sources ruled out any surprise calls for amemndments or any other unexpected demands.

But the fact that the United States and Britain have not, at least officially, seen the latest draft leaves some room for unexpected attitudes. The United Nations, however, has made a point of establishing close contacts with the United States and Britain to prevent surprises, and has kept them informed about the drafts indirectly. It is not clear if Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali is in a position to give Baghdad "official assurances" about

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U.S. and British attitudes but he can give assurances that the latest draft memorandum of understanding is the final draft because Resolution 986 empowers him to do so.

Circles close to the negotiations believe that Ambassador al-Anbari is unlikely to convey a Baghdad rejection of the memorandum to the secretary general because a direct rejection would carry responsibility for the failure of the negotiations. However, they did not rule out more negotiations, perhaps for several more days, to clarify the final positions and seek official assurances.

These circles left some room for the possible surprise of Baghdad approving the draft memorandum of understanding at a late hour yesterday, Sunday, depending on what happened between Butrus-Ghali and al-Anbari. A spokesman for the secretary general, however, has totally ruled out any announcement of an agreement yesterday, Sunday, and said that if an agreement was reached it would be unlikely to be announced before today, Monday, or tomorrow, Tuesday.

The spokesman said that the secretary general received at his headquarters Hans Corell, his legal adviser and head of the secretariat's negotiating delegation, to hear a report on the results of the talks. Other sources said that the secretary general had decided to receive al-Anbari later yesterday to hear the Iraqi position. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Oil-for-Food Deal Signed With UN

JN2005155596 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1545 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 20 May (INA)—A memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the UN General Secretariat on the sale of oil in exchange for food and medicine was signed on Monday, 20 May 1996. The memorandum was signed for the Iraqi Government by Ambassador Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of our negotiating team, and for the UN General Secretariat by Hans Corell, adviser to the UN secretary general for legal affairs.

A responsible source made the following statement to INA:

A joint meeting was held last Saturday, 18 May 1996 for the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and the Iraq Command of the Socialist Arab Ba'th Party. The conferees discussed the draft memorandum of understanding that was reached between our negotiating delegation and the UN delegation. During the meeting, specific instructions were given to our delegation in this regard.

In its session yesterday, 19 May 1996, the Council of Ministers discussed latest developments in the situation.

A telephone conversation took place on the issue last night between UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali and Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz, during which the UN secretary general stressed that the draft memorandum of understanding which was reached between the two delegations is final, that he endorses it, and that he is ready to sign it.

At the Presidency's request, the National Assembly held a special session on Monday morning, 20 May 1996, to study the results of the negotiations with the United Nations and the draft memorandum of understanding, and to give its opinion on it. RCC Vice Chairman 'Izzat Ibrahim explained the contents of the memorandum of understanding to the National Assembly members and the progress of the talks which lasted four months, during which Iraq had been careful to place emphasis on its sovereignty, the unity of its people and national security, and on a balanced implementation of the oil for food and medicines formula. The National Assembly discussed the issue. RCC Vice Chairman 'Izzat Ibrahim, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz, Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf, and Trade Minister Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih then answered questions by the National Assembly members. The National Assembly session lasted several hours.

Following the National Assembly session, the RCC and the Iraq Command held a joint meeting under the leader president. National Assembly Speaker Sa'dun Hammadi attended the meeting and informed the conferees of the National Assembly's decision to approve the agreement and to authorize the president of the republic to make the appropriate decision in this regard. In light of this, the subject was studied from all its dimensions and the necessary instructions were given.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz this afternoon sent a message to the UN secretary general informing him of the decision to approve the memorandum of understanding and to authorize Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of our negotiating team, to sign it. The message also explains the basic elements of Iraq's position on the subject.

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Iraq: Negotiator al-Anbari Denies Sending Message to Baghdad

MM2005131796 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 May 96 pp 1,6

[Report by Raghidah Dirgham in New York: "'Oil-for-Food Talks': Butrus-Ghali Expects Iraqi Decision Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali is personally intervening again in the "oil-for-food" affair, at a critical stage of the talks, which now center around the memorandum of understanding on implementing Resolution 986.

As of yesterday, the United Nations had still not received Baghdad's response on its position on the draft memorandum of understanding reached by the Iraqi and UN delegations at the talks. Butrus-Ghali is expecting a response from Baghdad today, bearing in mind that he will meet today with Hans Corell, the UN legal adviser and head of delegation, and with the Iraqi delegation's chief Ambassador 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari.

Forecasts range from optimism about an Iraqi agreement on the memorandum of understanding enabling the implementation of Resolution 986 and allowing Iraq to sell $1 billion's worth of oil every 90 days, and pessimism that Baghdad's response would require more amendments to and discussions of the memorandum's clauses.

UN circles have ruled out that Baghdad would adopt a position openly rejecting the memorandum of understanding, but said that delaying the negotiations and haggling would effectively mean the failure of the talks. They said that the secretary general wishes to settle the issue before leaving New York soon on another trip.

Informed sources said: "Nobody wants to be held responsible for the outright rejection" of the memorandum of understanding and for wrecking the "oil-for-food" negotiations. They pointed out, however, that the sides involved, especially Iraq and the United States, should be prepared for the eventuality of both failure and success, and, should the talks fail, find a way to "bury the dead."

The United States and Britain have focused on projecting an expectant attitude toward an agreement and insisted that the ball is now in Iraq's court.

In statements to AL-HAYAH, Ambassador al-Anbari denied remarks attributed to sources close to the talks to the effect that the Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations had written to the political leadership in Iraq telling them that, if they reject the deal, it would take another two years to revive the negotiations because of the loss of good will between the two delegations at the talks.

Al-Anbari said: "This report was leaked by a quarter which wants to send a message to Baghdad to threaten it and exert pressure on it, and attributes it to me instead of revealing its identity." He added that he does not send messages to the Iraqi leadership, but that, instead, he follows the procedures for contacting the Foreign Ministry and presenting the options to it so that the leadership can take decisions.

Al-Anbari explained that most technical aspects of the negotiations have been completed, with only the political aspects requiring technical political decisions remaining. Al-Anbari told the U.S. bulletin ENERGY COMPASS that Resolution 986 "will be dead and buried" if the current round of negotiations, the fourth since last February, does not succeed.

The two negotiating teams had reached formulas for compromise solutions in the memorandum of understanding dealing with the issues of sovereignty and supervision of the distribution of medicine and food. The secretary general stressed the day before yesterday [17 May] in Moscow that the agreement must provide "the required balance between the principle of Iraqi sovereignty and the supervision of food purchases and distribution."

According to informed sources familiar with the negotiations, the Iraqi leadership has several "options" within the proposed formulas to solve the pending problems concerning the immunity and privileges of the international personnel who will "monitor" the distribution of food and medical products in all parts of Iraq, and the issues of sovereignty.

Western diplomats pointed out that the ball is in Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's court with regard to the final decision on Iraq's agreement to the memorandum of understanding on implementing Resolution 986. The Iraqi side is saying, however, that the current proposal came as a result of U.S. and British amendments to the 10 April draft memorandum of understanding which "we had previously agreed on."

The remaining question is whether Baghdad will accept the amendments and whether it still has issues to be settled.

The secretary general is awaiting a response from Baghdad today, be it an agreement on the proposed formula of the memorandum of understanding or additional remarks concerning it. The fate of the negotiations on implementing the "oil-for-food" formula will depend on that response.

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Iraq: Minister Reacts to White House Statements on Oil Deal

JN2005202896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1930 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 20 May (INA)—Culture and Information Minister 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur said the statements issued by the U.S. White House on the agreement which Iraq signed with the United Nations regarding the sale of oil in exchange for food and medicine are prejudiced and reflect clear disappointment.

In a statement to INA, the minister said: The White House statements coincided with statements by the U.S. mission at the United Nations. This reflects the U.S. Administration's disappointment over the agreement that was reached over this issue.

The culture and information minister pointed out: These statements reflect the United States' disappointment with Iraq's signing of an agreement with the United Nations today, and after the failure of the U.S. Administration's interference in the dialogue. The 13 UN Security Council members denounced this flagrant interference in the dialogue.

He added: The White House's talk about the humanitarian aspect and the shedding of crocodile tears over the Iraqi people's suffering which was caused by the United States's insistence on maintaining the blockade and on harming the mujahid [martyr] Iraqi people are ridiculed by all the heroic Iraqi people, the ...ns of our glorious Arab nation, and all the good people in the world.

The minister asserted that the people of Iraq are very well aware of the party which caused the killing of their children and the death of their elderly people and women due to the shortage of medicine, food, and other basic needs. He said that the steadfast people will continue to recall the U.S. Administration's stands at the United Nations, the UN Security Council, and other international forums. These stands expressed vindictiveness, which caused more harm to the people of Iraq, without any pangs of conscience, as well as disregard for international charters and human rights, to which it clings.

The minister said that the steadfastness of the people of Iraq and their rallying around their leader President Saddam Husayn aborted all schemes targeting Iraq. He stressed that these people will remain hard to get by the enemies and will continue their heroic jihad with the same willpower and determination on the road to resurgence. He noted that the agreement signed with the United Nations today will reinforce steps to end the unjust blockade imposed on the patient and mujahid [martyr] people of Iraq, God willing.

'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur concluded by saying: Signing the agreement between Iraq and the United Nations is a step toward alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people because of the unjust blockade, which the United States sought to continue out of persistence to harm the people of Iraq, who maintain their independent decision.

Iraq: UN Deal Seen as 'Prelude' to Sanctions End

JN2105084996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0640 GMT 21 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 21 May (INA)—The Iraqi papers say that the signing of the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United Nations on the issue of exporting oil in exchange for food, medicine, and basic needs of the people has paved the way for ending the unjust siege by the enemies.

In front-page articles today, AL-'IRAQ, AL-QADISIYAH, and AL-JUMHURIYAH say that the signing of the memorandum of understanding is considered to be a major step that precedes the lifting of the unjust siege and paves the way for Iraq's legitimate demand to implement Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which will end the six-year blockade that which has been imposed on Iraq.

In an article headlined "Memorandum of Understanding With the United Nations Paves the Way for Ending the Unjust Blockade," AL-'IRAQ says: The agreement with the international organization is a temporary solution and an encouraging prelude to the removal of the barriers of the siege one after the other within a short period of time.

The Iraqi paper notes that Iraq has always believed that a constructive, serious dialogue, far away from wicked intentions and aims, will inevitably yield positive results for Iraq's relations with the United Nations. These results, the paper adds, reiterate Iraq's natural right to end the abnormal situation that the rancorous want to see dominate the relations between the two sides. The rancorous ones do not want the dialogue to serve the desire of both Iraq and the United Nations or to fulfill their mutual commitments in a way that will straighten out matters and restore relations to normal.

AL-'IRAQ adds in its article that the four-month dialogue was difficult and complicated. However, the firm and faithful will of the Iraqi side — the will that represents dignity, sovereignty, and legitimate rights and that does not tolerate any discussion, bargaining, or lenience — was behind the memorandum of understand-

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ing with the UN General Secretariat. The memorandum was drafted in according to an honorable formula that befits the patience, steadfastness, sacrifices, and jihad of the lofty Iraqis, who, with faith, have endured over the past six years the consequences and repercussions of a brutal blockade never before experienced by any people in history.

AL-'IRAQ points out that the Iraqi people welcome the memorandum of understanding, saying: "The Iraqis welcomed the memorandum of understanding signed yesterday with the UN General Secretariat based on their firm conviction and belief that, thanks to its leadership, unyielding Iraq reached an agreement that does not relinquish Iraq's unity—land, people, future, and destiny."

AL-'IRAQ concludes that the memorandum of understanding is clear and unequivocal international recognition and confirms anew that Iraq's friends and those who believe in its cause and its humanitarian message make up the majority and are more influential and capable of restoring rights and justice and defeating power, arrogance, and domination.

In an article headlined "By Patience, Steadfastness We March Forward Toward a Successful Crossing," AL-QADISIYAH says the agreement is the fruit of a strong Iraqi presence on the international scene. The agreement also shows strong Iraqi will in dealing with the United Nations. This enables us to say that the agreement is a first step. By seriously implementing this step, we hope it will cause a crack in the wall of the unfair blockade. The agreement is a temporary and exceptional solution on the road to implementing Paragraph 22 of Resolution 986. This constitutes a serious prelude to defeating the blockade.

The paper expresses hope that the agreement will usher in a serious stage as a prelude to a complete lifting of the blockade against our people. This will create broad prospects for our jihad march to enhance and strengthen our national economy and achieve more success by defeating inflation, continuing to raise the value of the Iraqi dinar, and reducing prices. This will ease the suffering of our people and improve their standard of living to a level that matches the ambitions of the Iraqi leadership.

In an article headlined "Today We Caused a Crack in the Wall of the Blockade, Tomorrow We Will Bring It Down," AL-JUMHURIYAH says: Iraq's steadfastness and its struggling people's patience preserved the homeland's unity and created hopeful prospects for liberation from the blockade.

The paper adds: The signing of the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United Nations has caused a clear crack in the wall of the blockade. Iraq's steadfastness and adherence to higher principles and values has exposed tendentious U.S. stands, even at the Security Council.

The paper points out that the Iraqi people's happiness is partial and that the people will remain vigilant as long as a single Iraqi suffers from the blockade. Patience and struggle will continue, accompanied by wisdom and the search for practical solutions to expand the crack in the wall of the blockade and bring the wall down, which will be a day for even greater happiness.

Iraq: 'Face-Saving' Oil-for-Food Deal Seen as Saddam 'Victory'

MM2105103296 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 21 May 96 p 17

[Article by Kamran Qurrah Daghi: "Saddam Always Wins"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Any agreement between Baghdad and the United Nations on Resolution 986 will be a victory for Saddam Husayn, whether it is implemented in a face-saving manner or ignored. If an agreement is reached, the leader of the world's worst totalitarian regime will have achieved one victory after another since the day his Republican Guards fled from Kuwait to avoid confrontation with the international coalition forces in early 1991.

These remarks are not meant to be derogatory or sarcastic, but are intended rather to state a fact. Saddam can only be defeated if his regime is "physically" removed. In dealing with Saddam, anything else is useless, because his principal mission in life is to stay in power, albeit in Baghdad.

It is paradoxical that Saddam's defeat in Kuwait should mark the beginning of his victories. First, there was President George Bush's decision to call for a premature cease-fire. Of course, it is unfair to hold the U.S. president entirely responsible for the fact that Saddam is still in power. He [Bush] took his decision because Kuwait was liberated and the Republican Guards were surrounded in southern Iraq. The wager was that these troops would undoubtedly take revenge on Saddam for causing their humiliating defeat. However, the mere fact that he was allowed to remain in power was Saddam's first victory.

Saddam's second victory, which in itself is truly surprising, was achieved for him by the current Defense Minister General Sultan Hashim, his envoy at the Safwan

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negotiations on the cease-fire conditions, to whom General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the coalition forces, "donated" an agreement which was not requested of him, allowing Iraqi forces to use helicopter gunships "to transport" Iraqi officials at a time when many thought that Schwarzkopf would impose conditions of surrender on the Iraqis.

Then came Resolution 687, described as "the mother of resolutions" and thought to include the harshest sanctions ever imposed by the United nations on one of its member states. This is true, but the resolution included a major loophole, linking the lifting of the sanctions to the removal of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Today, after five years of the strictest international monitoring, the United Nations is still convinced that Saddam is hiding biological weapons, long-range missiles, and abundant data on nuclear arms. In other words, Saddam wins here again.

After Resolution 687 came Resolution 688 on the Iraqi citizen's human rights. Of course, Baghdad scoffed at the toothless resolution because it was not adopted in accordance with Article 7 of the UN Charter, which allows it to use force to implement its resolutions. Saddam wins yet again. During the negotiations between the Kurds and Baghdad, in May 1991 to be more specific, when they had reached a stage when they were insisting on holding free elections all over Iraq in which opposition forces would participate, Colin Powell, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited Iraqi Kurdistan and informed his troops that they would return home after a month. Baghdad used this talk to its advantage after being in a weak position, and pushed the Kurds into a corner. The negotiations failed and Saddam won.

Later, the Kurds extended their control over an area eight times the size of Lebanon and inhabited by over 3 million Kurds, held elections, set up a local authority, and opened their areas to the Iraqi opposition which had started to slip away from the clutches of the regional forces, in the hope of establishing a launch pad for a movement to topple the Baghdad regime which would have international support. The attempt failed, first because the international community hesitated to support it; second, because the Iraqi opposition did not grasp the opportunity; and third, and more importantly, because the Kurds themselves were fighting each other over the spoils before even receiving them. And now, a "face-saving" agreement between the United Nations and Baghdad may be reached.

Saddam wins yet again.

Iraq: Speculation Over Reopening of U.S. Embassy in Baghdad

NC2105055496 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 17 May 96 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] Western diplomatic sources in the Iraqi capital say there is a strong possibility that the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad will reopen and resume its work. The Polish Embassy, which takes cares of U.S. interests in Iraq, has ordered a large consignment of furniture from Jordan to refurbish the U.S. Embassy building.

Iraq: Saddam Husayn Chairs New Cabinet Session

JN2005133796 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1030 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 20 May (INA)—His Excellency President Saddam Husayn presided over the 19th cabinet session.

His excellency the president asserted that one of the major causes of the 30-state aggression, which became evident in the immortal Mother of Battles, was the enemy's feeling that we were serious in our pursuit of science and development and that we were in contact with our historical roots and their national and pan-Arab context.

This came in remarks made by his excellency the president on the choice of Science Day in Iraq and the importance of this.

During the cabinet debate on the completion of a potable water network project in the al-Basrah Governorate, his excellency the president underlined the importance of maintenance operations for the potable water network in the governorate, as well as the need to learn the relevant lessons. He also stressed the need to abide by instructions and place them in clear perspective so that maintenance workers may comply with them.

His excellency the president asserted the importance of linking self-motivation to work, relevant measures, creativity, the risk factor, and productivity so that workers' performance may be promoted in terms of both quality and quantity.

The president also noted the need to accord due importance to services, especially in the area of maintenance, in the capitals of of governorates, districts, and subdistricts, and promote their capabilities in this regard.

When the cabinet discussed a new bill on privately-owned printing presses, the conferees said that printing press owners must refrain from printing, disseminating, or promoting pornographic or indecent publications,

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or those that promote sectarianism, racism, atheism, colonialist discourse, Zionism, or anti-Arab ideologies.

The new bill includes several provisions aimed at streamlining work at various kinds of printing presses. His excellency the president ordered that the bill be referred to the National Assembly.

The cabinet also debated topics listed on its agenda and adopted the necessary recommendations and decisions on them.

Iraq: Finance Ministry Says No Intention To Change Currency

JN2005205496 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2020 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source in the Finance Ministry denied the rumors that are disseminated by the fainthearted who deal with foreign currencies [such as] the dollar, that the state intends to change the Iraqi currency.

The source told the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY tonight that these rumors are old and trite and that those who spread them do not like to share our patient and mujahid [martyr] people [words indistinct] the fruits [words indistinct] on the road to dignity, resurgence, and sovereignty. The source added: [words indistinct] those who spread such rumors are interested only in illicit gains even at the expense of the sons of the people [words indistinct] the historic leadership of his Excellency President leader Saddam Husayn. [passage indistinct]

Iraq: 'Huge' Explosion Rocks Baghdad Fuel Complex 28 Apr

NC2005153296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On 28 April, as the regime was celebrating the tyrant Saddam's birthday, a huge explosion rocked the al-Raslaniyah fuel complex in Baghdad. The complex is located near the al-Rashid airbase. This report was published by the newspaper LIWA' AL-SADR in its latest issue. The paper adds that the explosion destroyed all the tanks and installations in the complex and caused many casualties. Ambulances were seen taking the dead and wounded to hospital.

The explosion caused panic among the regime's troops, who started to fire at random in all directions. All the roads leading to the scene of the explosion were cut off, and the troops on the al-Rashid airbase were put on maximum alert.

Our sources say the Islamic resistance forces carried out the operation.

Iraq: Opposition Reportedly Destroys Ammunition Depot Late Apr

JN2005144996 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi opposition claimed responsibility for the bombing of an ammunition depot, which belongs to the tyrant's regime, in late April in Jabarah area in the Karkuk Governorate.

The sources said a group of the opposition gunmen planted an explosive device inside the depot that caused extensive damage to the depot that housed large quantities of ammunition and hardware.

The same sources added that following the explosion, the regime, which was celebrating the tyrant's birthday, summoned security and army forces. These forces launched an extensive arrest campaign in Kifri, Jalawla', and Sulayman Bak. Over 40 people were arrested.

Opposition activity has been on the increase in the Jabarah area since March, when a bomb was detonated under the bridge that links the town to Jalawla'. The explosion destroyed the bridge and curbed the regime forces' movement.

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Israel: Baraq To Meet King Husayn on 21 May To 'Alleviate Tensions'

TA2005150596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq is scheduled to meet tomorrow with Jordan's King Husayn. This was reported by our political correspondent Shlomo Raz. The meeting comes in the wake of disappointment in Jordan regarding the development of relations between the two countries and criticism of Operation Grapes of Wrath. Yesterday evening, a discussion on the issue was held at Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' office in an attempt to alleviate tensions between Jordan and Israel.

Israel: Hamas Planned To Kidnap Israeli Soldier 'This Week'

TA2005182796 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 20 May 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Our correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activist Hasan Salamah, who is hospitalized in Jerusalem, told his interrogators that Hamas planned to kidnap an Israeli soldier this week.

Israel: Security Forces Arrest 13 in Raid Against Hamas

TA2005080196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of the operations against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], early this morning the Israeli security forces arrested 13 men suspected of engaging in hostile terrorist activities. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that they were arrested in the areas of Nabulus, Tulkarm, and Janin.

Israel: Al-Tibi Quits Race, Urges Support for Peres, Peace Parties

TA2105111996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 21 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad al-Tibi has dropped from the Knesset elections race. This was reported by our correspondent Ya'el Ayalon.

In a news conference in Tel Aviv, al-Tibi said he cannot accept the historic and moral responsibility for the loss of tens of thousands of votes in the Arab sector.

Al-Tibi called on Arab voters to support Shim'on Peres for prime minister and to vote for parties supporting the peace process and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Israel: New Bar Ilan University Poll Gives Peres 1.5-Percent Edge

TA1905121796 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 19 May 96 p A6

[Report by Or Qashti]

[FBIS Translated Text] A new poll received by Binyamin Netanyahu last weekend shows a 1.5-percent edge for Shim'on Peres in the premiership race: 46 percent for Peres against 44.5 for Netanyahu; 9.5 percent were still undecided. The pollsters, a team of Bar Ilan University academics, were unable to decipher the floating voters' inclination, although they believed they would mostly vote for Netanyahu.

The same team's poll last week gave Peres a 1-percent edge. The figures were 45, 44, with 11 percent floating votes.

Israel: Labor, Likud Agreements With Religious Reported, Denied

TA2005075796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 20 May 96

[Report by Yo'el Nir]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reports received both by Meretz and the Likud, Labor has scored a breakthrough with the ultra-Orthodox sector after making various promises. Ran Kohen from Meretz says the promises include aid to the Sacz, Wisznice, and Belz Hasidic communities. Kohen alleges that Sacz will receive 17 million shekels in aid for Laniado Hospital in Netanya, in addition to land for the construction of 500 housing units in the town. The Wisznice community will receive 6 million, and the Belz community will receive Jerusalem land worth $18 million at the price of just $4 million. Meretz claims that this aid is an indication of Labor's preference for a coalition with the ultra-Orthodox.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0700 GMT on 20 May adds: "Officials of the Wisznice hasidic community this morning denied allegations about an agreement with Shim'on Peres, whereby its members will abstain from voting for the premiership in exchange for budget allocations to their community. Shmu'el Halpert, the community's candidate for the Knesset, told our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel that the report was totally unfounded. According to him, there was no agreement with Binyamin Netanyahu either."]

These reports sounded an alarm in the Likud. Someone even took the trouble to leak a report that the Likud had made a deal with United Torah Jewry [UTJ] according to which the latter would receive deputy ministerial

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positions in the Housing and Religious Ministries if the Likud forms the next government. In return, UTJ rabbis would call on their public to support Netanyahu. Both Likud and the UTJ denied making any agreements.

Yet in response, SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] has sprung into action. Arye Der'i warned that if the Likud makes an agreement with the UTJ, SHAS will be free to see to its own interests. Der'i took pains to explain to Likud Chairman Netanyahu in a private conversation on 17 May that he was furious with the leak about an alleged SHAS-Labor agreement under which Rabbi 'Ovadya Yosef would announce on election day that he recommends voting for Peres. According to Der'i, nothing like that has ever happened.

Whatever the truth, the ultra-Orthodox community seems to be churning. Their dilemma is whether their vote should be Netanyahu or a blank form. Rabbi Avraham Ravitz, one of the UTJ leaders, says the spiritual leaders' dilemma is whether to make a pronouncement to their followers — even an implicit one — or to resort to word of mouth. In his opinion, a large segment of the ultra-Orthodox community may heed leaders who urge to opt for a blank form, but they worry that in that case, many voters will decide not to vote at all, not even for the Knesset.

The bottom line is that the decision is up to the rabbis, while politicians are waiting for crumbs to fall into their laps.

Israel: Settlement Rabbis Express Support for Netanyahu's Candidacy

TA1905182996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 19 May 96 p A4

[Report by Nadav Shragay and ITIM]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the end of last week, the Council of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza Strip rabbis called on "all those loyal to the Torah and to the Israeli people and country to do everything in their power to help Binyamin Netanyahu, the candidate of the national-religious camp, in the elections for prime minister."

The council's communique stated: "We pray that his victory in the elections will raise Israel's dignity, bolster and deepen Jewish and religious education, and strengthen our hold on the country. We therefore appeal to every Jew to make an effort to help get Binyamin Netanyahu elected."

The announcement is signed by: Rabbi Dov Li'or, the rabbi of Qiryat Arba'; Elyaqim Levanon, the rabbi of Elon More; Shlomo Aviner, the rabbi of Bet El; Zalman Melamed, the rabbi of Bet El B; Daniyel Shilo, the rabbi of Qedumim; Eli'ezer Melamed, the rabbi of Brakha; Rabbi Nahum Rabinovich, the head of the Ma'ale Adumim Hesder Yeshiva; and Rabbi Yig'al Kamintzky, the Qatif Bloc regional rabbi.

Rabbi Hayim Druckman, the head of the Bene 'Aqiva movement yeshivas published a call to support Netanyahu.

Druckman writes: "We are in the midst of an election campaign, the results of which will have a most crucial effect on the future of our country and the Jewish nature of our state. I have no doubt that out of the two candidates for prime minister, we must choose Netanyahu because the other alternative constitutes a very serious threat to the issues dear to our hearts."

Druckman adds that his opinions were reinforced "after I met with Binyamin Netanyahu several times and heard about his plans in all fields related to the secure future of our country and the Jewish nature of our state."

The Organization of Settlement Rabbis threatened at the end of last week to publish a communique calling on voters to support Binyamin Netanyahu's candidacy for prime minister if it did receive a written commitment about the status and employment conditions of its members.

The Organization of Settlement Rabbis represents approximately 300 rabbis, including rabbis from settlements affiliated with the Moshavim Movement and the Labor Party.

At a meeting with the Baba Barukh in Netivot last week, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres promised to accept the rabbis' demands. The organization has been fighting to regulate the status and employment conditions of its members for a long time. Until now, the rabbis claim that they are working without appropriate employer-employee relations.

At the end of the week, the settlement rabbis decided to boycott a convention of religious Labor Party activists scheduled to take place today with the participation of Prime Minister Peres, unless they received a written commitment that the prime minister would implement his pledge.

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Jordan, Egypt, Palestinians Coordinate Security Efforts

MM2005153096 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 May 96 p 6

[Unattributed report: "Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian Cooperation To Prevent Any Suicide Operation Before the Israeli Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Authoritative Jordanian sources said yesterday that there is high-level Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian security coordination in all three states to combat terrorism in any guise and from any source.

The sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinian Authority [PA] have adopted a security plan which relies on the security organs' cooperation and the exchange of information on the moves of the leaders and members of extremist organizations opposed to the peace process.

The sources explained that the plan, which was adopted during a meeting held on the fringes of the tripartite Cairo summit the Sunday before last [12 May], is aimed at thwarting suicide operations which could hamper the peace process and harm the PA.

The plan is also aimed at preventing extremist elements from illegally entering Israel and the self-rule area via Jordan, smuggling weapons and explosives which could be used in operations in Israel, or carrying out assassinations of Palestinian figures in the self-rule areas.

The authoritative Jordanian sources explained that the three sides, and in particular the Palestinian side, fear that suicide operations could affect the Israeli mood before the elections may be carried out, thus leading to victory for the opposition Likud bloc with its proposals and slogans opposed to the continuation of the peace process with the Palestinians and to withdrawal from occupied Arab lands in the Golan and southern Lebanon.

The sources said that the security organs' officials are conducting intensified contacts and exchanging information concerning the implementation of the adopted plan to prevent the smuggling of weapons and explosives or the illegal entry of any elements into Israel and the self-rule area, explaining that these contacts are taking place around the clock.

These Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian measures and coordination [efforts] follow the seizure of weapons smuggled into Jordan from Syria by Palestinian factions opposed to the peace process, in preparation for smuggling these weapons to Israel and the self-rule area for use in suicide operations.

Jordan has adopted tightened security measures along its borders with Israel and the self-rule area, deploying additional troops to guard the borders and increasing search patrols, aimed especially at private vehicles carrying young people, in order to prevent any infiltration into Israel and the self-rule area.

Jordan: Amman Welcomes Iraq's Acceptance of Resolution 986

JN2005174296 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 May 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordan welcomed Iraq's acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 986 on partial lifting of the blockade clamped on Iraq.

In a statement to the JORDANIAN NEWS AGENCY, Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that this decision will contribute toward ending the Iraqi people's suffering and enabling them meet their basic needs of food and medicine.

Jordan: Minister Says Water Among Issues Discussed With Turkey

JN2105093796 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 21 May 96 pp 1, 16

[Report by Ramadan al-Rawashidah]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that Jordan will continue to suffer from a huge water shortage even after it obtains all the water rights stipulated in the peace treaty with Israel. He noted that Jordan's only alternative is to seek additional water resources.

In his weekly meeting with reporters at the Marriott Hotel on 20 May, al-Mu'ashshir said that one of the objectives of his majesty the king's visit to Turkey a few days ago was discussing the water issue. Al-Mu'ashshir said that the king did not discuss water issues in detail, because studies need to be done first. Al-Mu'ashshir said that these discussions were introductory and aimed at examining the possibility of securing Turkish water supplies for Jordan. [passage omitted]

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Lebanon: Al-Hariri on Monitoring Committee, Turkish 'Threats'

NC2005164296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, who returns to Beirut from Paris this evening, has expressed his belief that the cease-fire monitoring committee will be formed instantly and will begin work within a week, if the points the Lebanese government sent are approved.

Al-Hariri met with French President Jacques Chirac at noon today and discussed the stage that follows the April understanding, the efforts being made to implement it, the talks held in Washington to set up the monitoring committee, and the consultative group in charge of Lebanon's reconstruction.

Al-Hariri described the meeting as good, adding that they focused on the monitoring committee and some of the points that were discussed with the Syrians. He added that ambassadors have been given instructions.

The prime minister's talks with the French president also dealt with Lebanon's reconstruction and the contribution France and the European Union are going to make. He pointed out that a meeting will be held in Brussels on Thursday [23 May] to follow up on the matter. The prime minister said:

[Begin recording] [al-Hariri] We discussed the monitoring committee and the points we discussed with our Syrian brothers. Instructions have been sent to ambassadors.

We also discussed Lebanon's reconstruction, and the French and European Union contribution. A meeting will be held in Brussels on Thursday to follow up on the matter.

[Unidentified correspondent] When will the monitoring committee be formed?

[Al-Hariri] Soon, I think. There is supposed to be a meeting today. If the points we sent are approved, I think the committee will be formed instantly. It will begin work within a week.

[Correspondent] Will Lebanon lodge a complaint against Israel for violating the April understanding?

[Al-Hariri] Definitely. We will lodge a complaint with the committee about this violation.

[Correspondent] [question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] This is one of the topics under discussion.

[Correspondent] [question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] In fact, all are responding positively. But as I said before, this is not an easy matter. It requires time and long discussions. We should not think that everything will be resolved within a week, two weeks, or a month.

[Correspondent] Do Turkey's threats to Syria concern Lebanon?

[Al-Hariri] This matter in fact ...[pauses] the Turkish position is surprising, particularly because of the historic relations between us. We think the Turks should reconsider their position, because these statements are unjustified and will produce no result. [end recording]

Lebanon: Israeli Aircraft Stage Mock Raids Over South

NC2005134096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli military aircraft are flying low over the south and staging mock raids, particularly over Tyre and the central sector. In the meantime, Israeli MK reconnaissance aircraft are flying over Tyre and adjacent areas.

Lebanon: Hizballah Accuses Israel of Violating Cease-Fire Agreement

LD2005084996 Tehran IRNA in English 0723 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, May 20, IRNA — The Lebanese Hizballah termed the Sunday [19 May] shelling of south Lebanon's residential areas by the Zionist regime as a clear violation of the April cease-fire agreement, which prevents both sides from shelling the civilian areas.

Speaking to IRNA, a Hizballah official in southern Lebanon, Shaykh Nabil Qavouq, said that the Sunday shelling of 'Yator' and 'Kafar Tabnit' regions, and also preventing activity of the Lebanese fishermen in the coasts of the southern Lebanon, are flagrant violations of the cease-fire agreement.

He called upon the Lebanese Government to fulfil its duty and lodge a protest against the Zionist regime to the cease-fire monitoring committee.

In the Sunday shelling of the southern Lebanon's residential areas a 30-year-old woman was seriously injured.

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Lebanon: Defense Minister on UN Report, Monitoring Group

NC1805171496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister of National Defense Muhsin Dallul has emphasized that Lebanon will no longer remain silent and be weak in confronting any Israeli aggression. He noted that the UN report on the Qana massacre fell short of what was desired because the investigating committee was more convinced of the situation than the report shows.

The minister said the points regarding the committee on the April so far endorsed have been derived from the Lebanese-Syrian paper. He noted that the Israeli side is in a hurry for fear that military operations might affect the next elections.

Lebanon: Iran's Khonsari Holds Talks With Birri on Reconstruction

LD2005142396 Tehran IRNA in English 1331 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, May 20, IRNA — The Iranian delegation led by Foreign Ministry Director General for Middle East and North Africa Seyyed Mohammad Kazem Khonsari, conferred with Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Birri here on Sunday evening [19 May]. The Iranian delegation is here to study ways to render help to the projects for reconstruction of areas devastated by the Zionist aggressions on Lebanon.

Lauding the high spirit of south Lebanese people against the Zionist regime as well as their all-out support for the Islamic resistance, Hojjat ol-Eslam Khonsari briefed Birri on the outcome of the delegation's inspection visits over the past couple of days to western al-Biqa' and areas devastated by the Zionists.

Khonsari reiterated Iran's readiness to actively contribute to reconstruction of the war-ravaged areas and pointed to the reconstruction projects Iran could implement in Lebanon.

Birri for his part dwelt on the latest regional and international developments and thanked Iran for its permanent support for Lebanese government and people.

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Syria: Paper Calls For Arab Solidarity, U.S. Dialogue

JN1905201996 Damascus AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 18 May 96 p 1

[Editorial by Chief Editor 'Amid Khuli: "Toward an Arab Self-Examination"]

[FBIS Translated Text] How will the Arabs benefit from the atmosphere arising from the Israeli aggression against Lebanon? How will they employ the Qana massacre to effect a qualitative change in the world stands on the Arab issue? This has been the most persistent question in the Arab political life since the cease-fire in Lebanon and the formation of a security committee in accordance with the April understanding.

The blood and torn bodies of the children and women in Qana have effected a significant change in world public opinion, which exerted strong pressures to bring an end to the massacre and aggression and to find ways to stop the Israeli bullying. The Israeli arrogance, aggression, and haughty reliance on U.S. support have prompted Israel to disregard and defy the world, practicing cold-blooded killing and intimidation against children and women in southern Lebanon.

In all that, Israel is taking advantage of the U.S. political axiom which says that giving Israel means of security encourages it to work for peace. This is a strange axiom that is void of any logic. Israel is being stuffed with all kinds of the most sophisticated and lethal weapons "for the sake of peace." Instead of encouraging Israel to seek peace, weapons encourage Israel to persist on the path of aggression, bloodbaths, arrogance, and rejection of peace.

According to the Israeli press itself, Peres could ask for nothing more during his recent visit to Washington since he was given all that he wanted. In fact, he became more arrogant, conceited, and careless about peace. He did not take even one step ahead to meet the requirements of peace. Moreover, his arrogance prompted him to make more impossible conditions which would turn peace into submission although he knows Syria rejects the peace of submission and refuses to abandon any of its known principles in the peace process. The peace of submission will not be acceptable under any conditions or circumstances.

The Arabs did not try to exploit this qualitative change in the world public opinion in the interest of their cause or to tighten the siege around the enemy. This is a rare opportunity which they should use to make a major shift in Arab policies toward Israel and any international power that supports it.

Before it is too late, the Arabs are required to work intensively to achieve two complementary objectives. First, they should work jointly to achieve at least a concerted position. Second, they should develop this position into a minimum unity of vision and approach to lay down the basis of an Arab solidarity which we have missed for so long. The current state of despair and misery suffered by the Arabs is the outcome of the lack of solidarity. This state that has been wickedly exploited by Israel to ensnare the Arab countries one after the other and to impose on them its terms one after the other.

The gloomy Arab situation is proof that we are facing Israel from a very weak position. Panting after Israel to please it without any return has killed our power and effort and even made some sides enjoy this humiliation and sometimes philosophize about it.

Aggression and massacres in Lebanon provided a rare opportunity for an Arab self-examination and allowed us to explore our way and review the current pan-Arab situation, which has resulted from some miscalculated policies seeking dialogue with Israel and rejecting it with the Arabs and other sides. These polices should be replaced by far-sighted, balanced polices to foresee future prospects; to take into account the interests, causes, and noble values of our pan-Arab heritage; and to stimulate Arab progress and chivalry. These are rhetorical, enthusiastic, and ideal words. Yet, they are the only words that can prod us to establish a joint pan-Arab position in the face of Israel, which harms our sanctities and kills our children and women.

We are sure that this situation will not last too long. It will not become a permanent condition in Arab political life because it is an exception and will remain so. Our nation will rise and rid itself of all the elements of weakness, which are not an integral part of the nation.

As the nation rises and tries its best to achieve solidarity and counter Israel's challenge, it should take appropriate steps to open a flexible, logical dialogue with the United States by using large-scale Arab-U.S. relations and interests to correct these relations, improve U.S. positions, prevent free-of-charge ties, and address American pragmatism logically and in light of future interests. The dialogue should be based on the joint interests. If this takes place, Israel will become a useless investment project without a useful future, compared to the Arab project and Arab future.

The matter may seem a little ideal and imaginary to a certain extent but it is the best starting point for making a change regardless of how long it will take. When the United States becomes aware that the Arabs adopt a joint position, that they have definite demands and path,

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and that they want to use the elements of their strength, a big change will begin.

Leader al-Asad told the parliamentarians yesterday: "Our nation is able to defend its existence, to overcome the current difficult circumstances, and to score victory." This dictum should form a basis for Arab strategy and lead to pan-Arab rise.

Syria: Press Assails Israeli 'Violation' of 'April Understanding'

JN2005082996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 20 May 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary under the headline "Israeli Violation of the April Understanding," published today, the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: Israel violated the cease-fire in southern Lebanon by targeting unarmed civilians there, which shows Israel's lack of credibility, its violation of all the pledges it makes, as well as its determination to persist with its provocative and destructive policy in the Middle East region.

AL-BA'TH adds: This violation did not come as a surprise. It is not a departure from the familiar Israeli course, which is based on promoting chaos and anarchy and exacerbating regional tension with the aim of entrenching its occupation of Arab territory, implementing its dirty programs and plots against the Arabs, and making them succumb to its wishes, dictates, and terms.

AL-BA'TH goes on to say: Toward that end, Israel did not hesitate to pursue the most heinous racist and terrorist policies under the very nose of the world community in complete disregard of all international and universal norms, conventions, and laws, taking advantage of the unlimited and generous U.S. support. Israel still aims to exacerbate the situation in southern Lebanon to thwart the April understanding, evade compliance with its provisions, and resume its pressures on Lebanon to make it join the bandwagon of capitulation, in which it aims to put all Arabs.

AL-BA'TH concludes by saying: Israel has failed to force its dictates on the Arab nation in general, and on Syria and Lebanon in particular. Israel has managed to drag some Arab sides to suspicious deals. However, this does not mean that the Arab nation should surrender or lose strength. The evidence is the growing Arab popular opposition to these deals as well as the failure of the Israeli aggression on southern Lebanon to achieve any of its goals. Thus, Israel's pressures, aggressions, and violations will only foster a greater rejection of its schemes, greater steadfastness and adherence to the nation's rights and interests, and a greater determination to liberate all occupied Arab territories.

Under the headline "Israel Violates the Understanding," the newspaper TISHRIN says: Israel deliberately violated the cease-fire in southern Lebanon. Thus, it is evading compliance with the provisions of the understanding in a bid to thwart it. The Israeli violation of the understanding by shelling Lebanese civilians was preceded by Israeli attempts to expand the work mechanism and structure of the monitoring committee provided for in the April understanding.

TISHRIN adds: Article 2 of the April understanding stipulates that Israel and those collaborating with it; namely, the Lahd militias, shall not open fire on civilians or civilian targets in Lebanon. This provision is clear. It does not need any explanations or interpretations. However, Israel used various weapons to shell Lebanese civilian targets and Lebanese civilians. Israel not only shelled civilians and procrastinated over the formation of the monitoring committee, it also enforced once again its naval blockade of the southern Lebanese coast. These recurrent Israeli aggressions show that Israel continues to deal with southern Lebanon and the southern Lebanese population from a perspective grounded in aggression, hatred, and terrorism.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Israel has not learned its lessons from the results of its treacherous brutal aggression, which lasted 17 days. It does not want to learn the lessons of Operation Grapes of Wrath, which was met by abysmal failure on the political and military levels. Israel does not want to realize that the only possible solution in southern Lebanon is political. Such a solution must include an end to occupation and implementation of Resolution 425. Given all of the above, going to excess in the use of military force, boasting of attacks and shelling, and perpetrating massacres under the guise of promoting Israeli security are useless. Israel must bring itself to understand this before it is too late.

Syria: Commentary Condemns Turkey's Yalmaz Bid 'To Harm Ties'

JN2005173196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 May 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz made provocative statements alleging that Syria supports the Kurdish Workers' Party. This calls for a moments reflection to explore the motives which prompted the Turkish prime minister to make such statements at this particular time, and the aim of his attempts to harm ties between Syria and Turkey.

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It is obvious to everybody that Yilmaz is facing an acute internal crisis and fears that it will exacerbate further—a crisis, which he and his predecessors ignored by alleging that it was the result of foreign interference. Yilmaz therefore accuses this or that party without regard for good neighborly ties and the historical ties between Turkey and the Arabs.

Instead of trying to heal the rifts he caused, Yilmaz went too far by allowing Israel to use Turkish airspace without taking into account that such a step would be a provocative and dangerous step in view of Israel's adherence to its aggressive policy and attempts to destroy peace prospects in the region.

Yilmaz tries to export his internal crisis, which is primarily a Turkish problem and has nothing to do with any neighboring country. In light of this, we can say that straining relations with Syria or other neighboring countries will further complicate matters and will not help Yilmaz solve outstanding problems with the EU member states.

The government of Yilmaz recently fabricated a crisis with Greece. However, he appears to have discovered that it did not distract the attention of the Turkish people from their suffering and deteriorating situation. Therefore, he held Syria responsible for his failure to find solutions to the internal problems and to deal with the bloody conflict with the Kurdish Workers' Party and also for the continuation of that conflict, which is exhausting the Turkish and Kurdish peoples, endangering the lives of their citizens, burdening the Turkish citizens, and forcing them to finance a civil war, to which there appears to be no imminent solution that is acceptable to both parties in the conflict in order to end the suffering of the people as well as the debts under which the treasury is straining.

Instead of trying to end the suffering of his people, looking for ways to end their grievances, and coping with the social disorders to achieve social justice, Yilmaz is seeking excuses for his failure by trying to distract the people's attention to problems outside the border. This is to conceal the causes of corruption inside the border, as well as the plots to push Turkey toward a slippery slope against the people's wishes, their ideological affiliation, and their historical ties.

We believe that the Turkish people, who maintain strong ties with Syria and the other Arab countries, and who have close religious ties with the Arab nation, will not tolerate a government that fabricates enmity toward Syria and tries to pressure it in favor of Israel and its ambitions. We also believe that the Turkish people will not accept their airports being turned into bases for Israeli planes and their airspace into a theater for the Israel's planes to use as a launch pad for aggression on neighboring Arab and Islamic states.

We also believe that the Turkish people will not in any way justify the sins the Yilmaz government committed by concluding a military agreement with Israel, standing in the same trench with it, and defying all the feelings of the Turkish people, their close brotherly ties with the Arab people and Islamic nations, and the resolutions and recommendations of the Islamic countries' conference.

Syria: Turkey Accused of Trying To Export 'Domestic Crises'

JN2105102196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 21 May 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "The Turkish Equation," TISHRIN comments on the Turkish Government's escalation of its hostility toward Syria as a reaction to its growing domestic crisis. The paper says official Turkish quarters are trying to blame domestic problems on external elements. Thus, Turkey has leveled false accusations against its neighbors, especially Syria, charging that it sponsors terrorism.

TISHRIN adds: The Turkish Government's behavior will not solve the ethnic problem in Turkey. On the contrary, this behavior will create more domestic and external crises for Turkey and will place it in a whirlpool of difficulties and social and economic crises.

TISHRIN continues: What is worse is that the Turkish authorities have sought the help of Israel in their conflict with part of the Turkish people. Turkish airspace has been opened to Israeli warplanes, and the Mosad has started to infiltrate official Turkish institutions. The Turkish Government thought that Israel's vast experience in suppression, terrorism, massacres, and aggression would help Turkey end the internal ethnic conflict.

TISHRIN says that it is naive to think that resorting to Israel will ease the Turkish Government burdens. The Turkish authorities have brought the Zionist beast — whose claws and teeth are smeared in the blood of innocent people in Lebanon and Palestine — into the Turkish community. Such a step, which is a clear provocation to the feelings of the Muslim Turkish people and a threat to their security, will create more problems for the Turkish Government. The paper says the Turkish-Israeli military agreement is, in reality, an unfriendly move by the Turkish Government against the Arabs. This move places Turkey on a collision course with the entire Arab nation and creates more problems with Arab countries. At the same time, the agreement

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adds an element of instability because it opens the door for a return of alliances to the region and creates new flashpoints.

TISHRIN adds that making provocative statements against Damascus, taking unfriendly steps toward it, obstructing a solution to the water problem, establishing an alliance with Israel, and other hostile positions will not solve the Turkish Government's problems. It would have been better for the Turkish Government to devote its efforts to resolving the ethnic crisis and establishing bridges of understanding and trust with its neighbors instead of destroying these bridges.

TISHRIN affirms that Syria's announcement that it is concerned about its historical relations with Turkey does not mean it is ignoring the provocations or the unfriendly moves by the Turkish Government on issues pertaining to water and security, political positions, and media campaigns that are hostile to Damascus.

The paper concludes: We hope that the Turkish Government will heed reason and logic in its policy toward its neighbors and that this government will reconsider its unfriendly stands toward Syria. We also hope that Turkey will show willingness to engage in a serious dialogue that aims at resolving all outstanding problems and turning over a new leaf in neighborly relations. Once this happens, Turkey will find a positive response from Syria regarding cooperation and understanding.

Commenting on the same issue, AL-BA'TH explains the dangers of the Turkish-Israeli agreement. The paper also comments on Turkey's exposed alliance with Israel and its accusations and threats against Syria. This Turkish attitude can only be viewed as a purely aggressive stand adopted by the Yilmaz government for several reasons, primarily to participate in the pressure campaign against Syria designed to undermine its honorable and courageous positions on all national issues.

AL-BA'TH says Syria is not willing to bear the burden for the other reasons that prompted Turkey to act this way. These reasons are basically linked to Turkey's attempt to export its countless domestic crises. Syria is also not willing to accept responsibility for the security of any neighboring country.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Syria has repeatedly asserted that it will not allow any aggressive action from its territory against Turkey. Syria reasserts its adherence to its legitimate right to water from the Euphrates water to face any military alliance that threatens its security. Above all, Syria adheres to neighborly relations. It will not engage in dated media vituperations.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: President Rabbani Holds Meeting With Opposition Leader

LD2005172896 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1600 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The esteemed Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, this afternoon met the esteemed Golboddin Hekmatyar, the leader of Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] Afghanistan in [words indistinct].

The presidential press office reports that during the meeting, which was also attended by the esteemed Professor Abdorrab Rasul Sayyaf, the leader of Ettehad-e Eslami [Islamic Union] and the esteemed Qazi Hussain Ahmad, the leader of Jam'iyat-e Islami of Pakistan, talks were held and views were exchanged on the current situation in the country, on the cessation of hostilities and tension between groups and parties, and on ensuring a reliable, permanent, and complete peace. During today's meeting between the president and the leader of Hezb-e Eslami the continuation of talks and understanding was noted and emphasized as the most reliable way of resolving problems and ensuring peace and stability across the country. Both sides described the talks as useful and expressed satisfaction with their outcome. They agreed that contacts and talks should continue and that they should be used as a pivot for talks with other groups and parties. Both sides believe that all issues should be resolved through talks between all parties. [passages indistinct]

Afghanistan: Hekmatyar—New Government Must Be Acceptable to All Parties

LD2005200996 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] and Jam'iyat-e Eslami [Islamic Society] have been holding talks for a long time and we are hoping to reach a final agreement soon. This point was made by Brother Hekmatyar, the leader of Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan, in a meeting with Radio Message of Freedom's commentators at the headquarters of the 1st Army Corps in Nangarhar yesterday morning. He added: Our hope is to reach a final agreement soon. The aim of Hezb-e Eslami's talks with Jam'iyat-e Eslami is not to share power with the current administration in Kabul. Our dialogue is to set up such a government as is acceptable to all the sides involved.

On the nature of the internal and foreign policy of the future government, the emir of Hezb-e Eslami said: It is too early to speak about a government policy in general and its foreign policy especially. Brother Hekmatyar said: It is natural when a new government comes into being, that its internal and foreign policy and its policy on the region and world will be such as is acceptable to all.

On the stance of Jonbesh-e Melli [National Islamic Movement], which is a fellow member of the High Coordination Council, on Hezb-e Eslami's talks with Jam'iyat-e Eslami, the emir of Hezb-e Eslami said: Our talks have started in keeping with a formal decision by the High Coordination Council. In one way or another we represent the council in the talks. But its does not mean that we have the full authority to sign a final agreement with the Kabul administration on behalf of the High Coordination Council. The purpose of starting talks was to pave the way for talks between the Kabul administration and the High Coordination Council as a means of sensibly resolving the crisis in the country.

The leader of Hezb-e Eslami added: So far no one has opposed the on-going talks between the Hezb-e Eslami and Jam'iyat-e Eslami. If some people have opposed them, they are entitled to their opinion. And they cannot represent the High Coordination Council. The High Coordination Council is discussing this matter. It is hoped that it will agree to talks.

Afghanistan: Islamic Movement Spokesman Opposes Rabbani-Hekmatyar Accord

LD1905111596 Tehran IRNA in English 0930 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, May 19, IRNA — The National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan led by General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam has announced any agreement between Hekmatyar and Rabbani is the deal between the two parties and has nothing to do with the Supreme Coordination Council of the Islamic Revolution in Afghanistan (SCCIRA).

General Painde [name as received], a National Islamic Movement spokesman in Islamabad talking to IRNA Sunday said that the council will announce its reaction only when the both said groups officially declare their alliance.

The Supreme Council is an alliance of the four Kabul government opposition parties that include Hezb-e-Eslami-ye Afghanistan (HIA) of Hekmatyar, National Islamic Movement of General Dostam, Hezb-e-Wahdat of Karim Khalili and National Liberation Front of Mojaddedi.

Hezb-e-Eslami of Hekmatyar recently held negotiations with the Rabbani government to jointly administer the war-ravaged country.

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The Afghan experts view the deal casts greater doubt on the future of the Afghan opposition coalition.

General Painde also announced that Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, chief of the Supreme Coordination Council on Tuesday will visit Mazar-e Sharif, where he will hold talks with General Dostam on the latest political developments in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Mullah Mohammad Hassan, governor of Kandahar and a central leader of Taleban militia, termed Hekmatyar's joining with the Kabul government a mistake and called upon him to review his alliance with Rabbani.

Qarebur-Rahman Sayyed a HIA spokesman in Peshawar told IRNA on Saturday that his party in the first phase was trying to evolve reconciliation between SCCIRA and the Kabul government and on the next phase it would strive to remove difference between the Taleban and the government.

He added HIA alliance with the government did not mean any move against Taleban. "The sole aim was to establish a coalition government and end of ongoing crisis in Afghanistan," he maintained.

The HIA spokesman also hailed Iran's role in ending differences among many Afghan groups and restoration of peace in Afghanistan.

According to another report the Afghan party Hezb-e-Wahdat and Taleban have agreed to sink their difference and form a broad-based alliance against Rabbani government.

Observers believe that the Taleban's move to join hands with Hezb-e-Wahdat was meant to counter Rabbani-Hekmatyar's partnership against them.

Afghanistan: Hekmatyar—Mojahedin 'Infidels' Worse Than Communists

LD1905201696 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Golboddin Hekmatyar, the amir of Hezb-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan [Islamic Party of Afghanistan], performed last Friday's [17 May] special prayers in the Bazazi mosque in Jalalabad City, the capital of Nangarhar Province. Brother Hekmatyar delivered a sermon on the encouragement of good and the prevention of vice.

Addressing the worshippers, he said: It is the duty of every Muslim to call people to good and to keep them away from vice. Brother Hekmatyar said: Besides the encouragement of good and the prevention of vice, it is also the duty of Muslims to defend the prescribed orders of God to the extent of sacrificing their lives and property. Muslims must stand and fight against the aggressors. They must be kind to Muslims.

Brother Hekmatyar said: Our nation offered great sacrifices for the sake of our country's freedom and the establishment of an Islamic regime. As a result, we liberated our country from the domination of the Russians and communists. A large number of subjugated nations also gained independence as a result of our people's sacrifices.

At the end of his speech brother Hekmatyar said: Unfortunately, our jihad has recently faced the conspiracies of infidels. Mistakes were made by the jihadi leaders as a result of which our country and compatriots have been burning in the fire of a civil war over the past four years. The country's national treasures have been looted. Lawlessness has started in every village, district, and province of the country. The mojahedin committed illegal and grave acts and atrocities that the communists did not commit.

Afghanistan: Taleban Rocket Attack Leaves 9 Dead, 26 Injured in Kabul

LD2005201296 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a heavy rocket barrage, the Taleban have martyred nine residents of Kabul. BAKHTAR reported that today the Taleban fired dozens of rockets into residential and crowded areas and into Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital. As a result, nine people were martyred and 26 others were injured. On top of this, some houses were also damaged. The attack was the heaviest by the Taleban over the past month.

The artillery units of the Islamic Army responded to the Taleban rocket attack by bombarding the group's concentrations and fortifications. Heavy weapons fire continued along the first lines of the front line during the course of the day.

Afghanistan: Government Forces Retaliate for Rocket Attacks on Kabul

LD2105100996 Tehran IRNA in English 0745 GMT 21 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, May 21, IRNA — Twelve civilians were killed and 26 others were injured in Monday's shelling of the Afghan capital, the city's security commission reported Monday night. Kabul Monday witnessed the heaviest shelling by the Taleban militia, with 50 shells and katyusha rockets pounding the city's residential areas, as well as its hospitals and schools. A number of commercial centers and

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government buildings, including the Kabul radio and television station were also hit, the security commission disclosed.

In a statement released Monday, the Afghan Defense Ministry said that state troops, in a retaliatory move, hit Taleban positions in the Chahar Asiab, Maydan Shahr, Rish Khvor, Sangan-e Beshteh and Gol Bagh regions, inflicting heavy casualties on the group.

A source at the Afghan defense ministry also added that the 'Mes Eynak' village and a number of strategically important heights north of Lowgar Province were captured by government forces during Monday's blitz. Scores of Taleban troops were killed or injured and a large quantity of weapons and ammunitions were seized by the troops, the source claimed.

The statements made by the Afghan government have not been confirmed so far by any independent source.

Afghanistan: Taleban Reportedly Offends Shiite Muslims in Lowgar

LD1805171396 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban group has been forcing Shiite brothers to observe their daily prayers in Sunni mosques with others in Sunni style.

Eyewitnesses who have recently returned from Lowgar Province said to a Radio Message of Freedom correspondent that the Taleban group had been treating local people harshly, and forcing followers of the Shiite religious sect living in the province to perform their daily prayer in Sunni communal mosques in the manner of Sunni worshippers.

According to the eyewitnesses, the Taleban group's purpose, in behaving in such an impermissible manner, is to show off their faithfulness to the sacred religion of Islam more than others. This kind of action is against the interests of Muslim unity. Such behavior will cause discord and arouse hatred among Muslims.

According to reports, the people of Khoshi district, Lowgar Province, have expressed serious resentment with regard to the disharmonious action of the suspicious Taleban group and have complained to [word indistinct]. No report is available as yet on the reaction of the Taleban group.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Defense Ministry Reports 'Rebellion Has Been Put Down'

BK2105095396 Hong Kong AFP in English 0944 GMT 21 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, May 21 (AFP) — The new Army Chief Major General Mahbubur Rahman was in full control of the Bangladesh army and the rebellion has been put down, the defense ministry said Tuesday in its first comment on the situation.

"Troops who had earlier moved from Bogra and Mymensingh areas towards Dhaka returned to their respective barracks," a ministry statement said.

It added Rahman had taken command of the Bangladesh army.

The announcement came hours after former army chief Aba Salem Muhammad Nasim was taken into "protective custody" by troops loyal to the government and Rahman held talks with Bangladesh President Abdur Rahman Biswas.

Biswas is also the defense minister and commander in chief of the armed forces.

Bangladesh: Nasim Denies Charges, Claims President Undermining Election

BK2105055596 Hong Kong AFP in English 0517 GMT 21 May 96

[Report by Golam Tahaboor and Nadeem Qadir]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, May 21 (AFP) — Tanks remained on guard around the Bangladesh presidential palace on Tuesday after a night of tension and confusion following the sacking of the national army chief.

The authorities have taken Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Muhammad Nasim into "protective custody," a defence source said, adding that troops loyal to Nasim who had left their barracks would be brought to Dhaka.

But a reliable army source said many of the several thousand troops who revolted in favour of Nasim were still at large. The source said a few had given up.

Troops from two garrisons in northern Bangladesh were said to have left their bases to back Nasim.

Troops loyal to the government were also on guard around other key installations in Dhaka where hundreds of curious onlookers crowding around them. But no incidents were reported.

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Tanks moved into the streets of Dhaka on Monday night after President Abdur Rahman Biswas ordered the sacking of Nasim. The government said the action was to maintain order.

Biswas accused the military chief of refusing to order two senior officers to retire. He also said Nasim had called on his followers to march on Dhaka.

A defence source said Nasim was "resting in the army guest house and is in protective custody." The source said Nasim was safe and the overall situation in the country was calm. The source said the new army chief, Major General Mahbubur Rahman, had met Nasim and assured him he would be well looked after. Rahman was also said to be meeting other senior officers.

In an interview with the BBC, of which a transcript was made available to Dhaka newspapers, Nasim denied the charges and accused Biswas of trying to undermine the general election to be held on June 12.

The president followed his announcement of the sacking with an appeal for calm and an offer of clemency to "misled" troops who responded to Nasim's call.

The appeals by Biswas and the caretaker government chief Muhammad Habibur Rahman and the clemency offer were repeated by the radio on Tuesday. State radio and television were also protected by troops but they put out normal programmes.

Children went to school as normal and the central Motijheel business district opened for the day.

The only sign of nerves was the number of people besieging newspaper stands to get the latest news of the dramatic events, which cast a shadow over preparations for the new election on June 12.

The Awami League, which led the opposition campaign that forced Khaleda Zia to stand down as prime minister in March, has also accused Biswas, a member of Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party, of trying to undermine the election by sacking the army chief.

The crisis erupted after the president ordered Major General G.H. Morshed Khan, the Bogra district commander, and Brigradier Miran Hamidur Rahman, deputy director of the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles, to retire.

Amidst reported army accusations of political interference ahead of the election, Nasim in turn ordered other officers to retire or take up new duties.

The 100,000 strong armed forces ruled Bangladesh directly or indirectly between 1975 and 1990, but took a backseat after democracy was restored in 1971.

India said it planned to tighten security on the frontier with its neighbour in response to the crisis. The United States has said it is monitoring events.

Bangladesh: Defense 'Source' Confirms Nasim in 'Protective Custody'

BK2105042496 Hong Kong AFP in English 0422 GMT 21 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, May 21 (AFP) — Former Bangladesh army chief Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Muhammad Nasim is in "protective custody," a defence source said Tuesday.

"He is resting in the army guest house and is in protective custody," the source said, adding that Nasim was safe and the overall situation in the country was calm.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas ordered tanks to take positions at key points in the capital on Monday night after sacking Nasim.

The source said the new army chief, Major General Mahbubur Rahman, had met Nasim and assured him he would be well looked after.

According to the source, government troops had "total control" of the country and that all rebel troops and their leaders would be brought to Dhaka.

The new military chief has started meetings with senior officers which were to continue Tuesday.

Bangladesh: Rival Army Groups Clash After Army Chief's Ouster

BK2105005496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0035 GMT 21 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Bangladesh, tanks and troops have been guarding strategic positions in capital, Dhaka, since the president, Abdur Rahman Biswas, sacked the chief of [word indistinct due to break in transmission] Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim yesterday. Mr. Biswas said General Nasim had disobeyed orders and tried to launch a rebellion. The president has appointed Major General Mahbubur Rahman as the new Army chief. Soon after the dismissal, troops surrounded the presidential palace and took up positions at the radio and television centers. Reports of clashes among rival army groups have also come in.

In a broadcast over radio and television, the president has urged the soldiers not to engage in face-to-face confrontation with the people. Meanwhile, the government has also directed army personnel who had come out off Bogura and Mymensingh cantonments to go back

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to their barracks. They have been assured that no penal action will be taken against those returnees.

The former opposition leader, Sheikh Hasina, has criticized General Nasim's dismissal. She said the move is aimed at demoralizing the armed forces ahead of next month's general elections. Sheikh Hasina said the sacking is to protect the interests of Begum Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

Bangladesh: President's Address on Replacement of Army Chief

BK2005183396 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1433 GMT 20 May 96

[Address to the nation by Bangladesh President Abdur Rahman Biswas on 20 May; place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear Countrymen: Peace be upon you. On the eve of the general elections to be held on 12 June 1996, I am calling upon the leaders of all political parties, their workers, and all people in the country to conduct the elections in a free and peaceful manner. I seek your sincere cooperation to strengthen the country's democratic process and maintain the democratic atmosphere.

You all are aware that from the very outset the caretaker government formed under the 13th Constitutional Amendment, by the (?Sixth) Parliament, took [words indistinct] steps to conduct fair elections in the country. The Election Commission has taken various steps for smooth elections. Under the [word indistinct] provision of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, I did not delay and appointed a chief adviser and 10 advisers. The chief adviser, former Chief Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman, allotted the responsibilities of various ministries of the government (?among the 10) advisers.

Dear countrymen, you know that according to the Constitution the president of the country is the supreme commander of the armed forces, and at present he is an elected president. According to the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, the president, the supreme commander of the country, was entrusted with the Defense Ministry and Armed Forces Department. In this context, clarifications were made from my office and on behalf of the government so that there is no confusion among the people. These clarifications have been duly published by almost all newspapers in the country.

The Army is the pride of the country. It is indispensable for every member of the Army to abide by all rules, discipline, and responsibilities. The memory of the unlimited sacrifices made by Army personnel in the country's war of independence is still glaring. We must all be alert to maintain the glorious image of our Army. You know that every member of the Army is guided by the rules and regulations of the Army Act. Just as there are provisions for rewards for acts of bravery and welfare activities, there are also necessary arrangements for breach of discipline.

Dear countrymen, under the Army Act and related rules, as a minimal step, two officers have been subjected to forced retirement. This includes all financial facilities. I feel that the order involving them is judicious and lenient. I had to take this step to maintain discipline. For everyone's information, I would like to state that Major General Vir Vikram G.H. Morshed Khan, the Bogra area commander, [words indistinct] breach of discipline, [words indistinct], contact with various political parties, and (?attempting to incite) feuds and tussles among members of the Army. Clear evidence has been received against Brigadier Miran Hamidur Rahman, deputy director general of the Bangladesh Rifles, testifying to similar charges and also (?incitement) against Army members, moral degradation, and direct contacts with political leaders [words indistinct] and breach of discipline.

At the very moment when an election atmosphere is prevailing in the country and when the common man of the country is eager to establish a democratic government by electing people of his choice, two senior officers of the Army [words indistinct]. Therefore, in the interests of the country and the nation, in order to maintain discipline in the Army and maintain the sanctity of the Constitution, I approved the decision to force the retirement of these two officers.

Dear countrymen, it is imperative upon every member of the Army to obey the above mentioned (?official) order unhesitatingly. It is very regrettable that Army chief Abu Saleh Muhammad Nasim [words indistinct] showed haughtiness by not obeying this order and breached Army discipline and committed an act tantamount to declaring revolt against the government — a grave offense for an Army officer — by organizing Army personnel under him against the above mentioned order and them marching toward the capital, Dhaka.

The nation cannot accept this unpardonable haughtiness. The whole issue was discussed in detail with Habibur Rahman, chief adviser of the caretaker government. In this context, in order to protect national security and the country's sovereignty, maintain the glorious image of the Army, and ensure the safety of the people's lives and property, and in accordance with the Army Act, Army Chief Lt. Gen. Abu Saleh Muhammad Nasim [words indistinct] has been relieved of his duties as Army chief effective today. Major General Mahbubur Rahman, chief of the General Staff, [word indistinct]

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has been appointed to take responsibility as Army chief. The order has already gone into effect.

At this juncture in the nation, dear countrymen, I am calling upon you to maintain patience and courage. The above mentioned step has been taken to deal with this situation. I am making a fervent call to my countrymen to maintain peace and order. In the past, the revolutionary people and members of the Army overcame (?many) crucial tests. I hope that as the nation moves toward electing a democratic government, the people will not accept an attempt to thwart it by creating an (?unhealthy) situation. I fervently appeal to all patriotic people of the [words indistinct] of all sections in the country, political leaders, police, Bangladesh Rifles members, auxiliary force, laborers, and citizens to give preference to the national interest over (?party) interests and join the march toward the uninterrupted process of democracy and unitedly [words indistinct]. I firmly believe that you will cooperate in maintaining the sanctity of the Constitution.

May God help us. May God take care of you. Long Live Bangladesh!

Bangladesh: PRC Reports on Nasim Ouster

OW2005141396 Beijing XINHUA in English 1234 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, May 20 (XINHUA) — Bangladeshi Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen. A.S.M. Nasim was surprisingly asked to retire today.

A Defense Ministry Notification said today that the army chief has retired from services with immediate effect.

No reason was given for the surprise retirement.

Since the former government of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was forced to step down on March 30, President Abdur Rahman Biswas has been in control of the Defense Ministry under the caretaker government led by Chief Adviser M. Habibur Rahman.

Another Defense Ministry notification said that the Chief of General Staff Maj. Gen. Mahbubur Rahman is in temporary charge of the Office of the Chief of Army Staff.

Bangladesh: Awami League Supporters Protest Army Chief's Dismissal

BK2005164996 Hong Kong AFP in English 1650 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, May 20 (AFP) — The former opposition party that helped bring a caretaker government to power took to the streets of Dhaka Monday night to protest the sacking of the army chief by the president, witnesses said.

Two separate marches by several hundred Awami League supporters chanting slogans against President Abdur Rahman Biswas were dispersed without any violence, the witnesses said.

There was so far no official comment from any major political parties.

Bangladesh: Indian Military on 'Security Alert' at Border

BK2005133996 Hong Kong AFP in English 1325 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI May 20 (AFP) — India on Monday was planning to tighten security at the borders with its tiny South Asian neighbour Bangladesh where the army has taken over national radio and television stations after a military shakeup.

Military sources here said the eastern command of India's million-plus army was on a security alert in provinces which border Bangladesh because of the developing situation in the neighbouring country of 120 million people.

"We are watching the situation now," a military spokesman said amid reports than tanks had taken to the streets in the Bangladesh capital of Dhaka.

The paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF), which has tens of thousands of combat troops on the frontiers of the Indian states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, West Bengal and Manipur were also on a high alert, officials said.

"Things are not very clear now but if military hostilities flare up in Bangladesh then we could expect refugees in thousands to pour into India," a BSF official said requesting anonymity.

Reports in Dhaka said troops loyal to a caretaker Bangladeshi government began marching on the capital after the sacking of army chief Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Muhammad Nasim.

Several thousand troops were moving towards Dhaka, but it was unclear whether they were supporting their ousted military chief or the country's president, Abdur Rahman Biswas.

Bangladesh was carved out of erstwhile Pakistan after a war between South Asian rivals India and Pakistan in 1971 resulted in a military defeat for Pakistan in the deltaic region.

The country has been ruled directly or indirectly by the military between 1975 and 1990 and has seen much

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political unrest, including assassinations and military coups since its creation 25 years ago.

Bangladesh: Indian Sentiments About Developments in Bangladesh Army

BK2105033996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0255 GMT 96

[Commentary by Defense Analyst K. Subramaniam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Abdur Rahman Biswas of Bangladesh has dismissed the chief of Army Staff General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim charging him with attempting to organize his forces to march on Dhaka. The president has made a TV broadcast seeking the loyal support of the Army. The crisis appears to have its origin in the enforced retirement of two generals on 18 May 1996 on the ground that they were getting in touch with political leaders and creating tensions in the Army. General Nasim did not agree with the government's action. He met the president on 19 May presumably to seek the reversal of the order of retirement. That plea was not acceded to. Major General Mahbubur Rahman has been appointed as officiating Army chief and tanks are guarding the presidential palace, the TV, and railway stations as a precautionary measure. Accusations have been made that the enforced retirement of the two generals earlier was a partisan act. The dismissal of General Nasim has been criticized by Sheikh Hasina, the leader of Awami League.

This development will shock all those who have been commending the role of Bangladesh Army during the two-year long political crisis and its refusal to succumb to the temptation of intervening in it. In its 24 years of independent existence, Bangladesh has experienced only nine years of nonmilitary rule. The Army is expected to play a major role in keeping law and order in the forthcoming elections on 12 June 1996. In such circumstances, the complete neutrality of the Army is an essential prerequisite for free and fair poll. Unfortunately, Bangladesh has inherited a political culture in which not only the Army, but even the senior civil servants have actively participated in politics. Begum Khaleda Zia was finally forced to resign her prime ministership when the topmost civil servants joined the agitation seeking her resignation. In turn, after her resignation she has been asking for disciplinary action against them on the plea that their continuance would lead to undue influence on the elections.

It is difficult to say whether the current developments are a fallout of partisanship among the highest levels of government, Army, and civil services. In that case, it is not an auspicious augury for the forthcoming elections. The latest reports mention outbreak of fighting in Jaydebpur and Bogura cantonments between troops loyal to General Nasim and those loyal to the new Army chief General Rahman. Interestingly, the former president General Ershad who ruled Bangladesh for seven years after seizing power in a military coup and has been convicted of corruption and is in jail has been allowed to contest the elections, since his appeal against conviction is still to be disposed off. In the light of these developments, the prospects for orderly elections in Bangladesh have been clouded.

Bangladesh: Former Army Chief Nuruddin Khan Injured in Car Accident

BK2005130796 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General M. Nuruddin Khan, former chief of the Bangladesh Army, was seriously injured in a road accident near Panchkhola on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway this morning. Quoting family sources, BANGLADESH SANGBAD SANGSTHA said Khan had the accident while on his way to electoral constituency [name indistinct]. He is running in the coming parliamentary election on the Awami League ticket from Nasinghdi-4 constituency. The accident occurred when a speeding bus from the opposite side hit Khan's car. Local people rescued the unconscious Khan from the wrecked car and took him to the Combined Military Hospital [CMH] at (Pukurbhata). CMH sources said that Khan's right leg, left arm, and several ribs were broken. Narsinghdi Police seized the bus and are investigating the cause of the accident.

Bangladesh: Commentary Pleads for Just Share of Ganges Water

BK1705120896 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 16 May 96

[Station Commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Farakka Day was observed in Bangladesh today. On this day in the year 1976, the late national leader, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, made a long march to Farakka to draw global attention to the enormous human and environmental disaster. The purpose of this long march was to highlight the fact that almost one-third of the country's plain lands was being turned into a barren land as India cut off the waters of the Ganges River after constructing a barrage upstream.

The Ganges is an international river because it flows through multiple countries. Obstructing the natural flow of this river is a violation of international law. Unfortunately, Bangladesh has become a victim of this violation. Every year, Bangladesh is incurring losses worth

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several billion dollars as India has constructed a barrage at Farakka in violation of international law. Agricultural fields are being destroyed, rivers and canals are drying up, and fishery resources are on the verge of extinction. Experts say that Bangladesh is heading toward a major environmental disaster as the process of desertification has started in one-third of the country. This ecological debacle will destroy the lives of about 25 million people in the country, about one-fourth of the total population. Many among them will be forced to abandon their traditional occupation as fishermen and will crowd cities. As a result, people will be crowding into the major cities in the country for their (?livelihood), creating a great (?pressure) on the economy.

Due to India's unilateral withdrawal of water in the upper reaches of the Ganges, the water passing through Bangladesh is drying up every year and the unemployed people in these areas are being compelled to go elsewhere. The Ganges originates at the bottom of the Himalayas in Nepal. It flows through the middle of northern India and passes through Bangladesh before falling into the Bay of Bengal. In the early 70's, India commissioned a barrage at a place called Farakka in the state of West Bengal about 24 kilometers from the Bangladesh border. As a result of the commissioning of the Farakka barrage, the flow of the Ganges River was reduced drastically and Bangladesh has been deprived of water during the dry season.

The two neighboring countries reached an understanding with a view to ensuring a minimum share of the Ganges waters for Bangladesh in the dry season from November to April. In fact, there is practically no written agreement on the Ganges water issue between the two countries. Thus, India being an upstream country is taking geographical advantage of the share of the water. The last memorandum of understanding on the sharing of the Ganges water expired in 1988. After this, Bangladesh did not receive any water from the Ganges River. As a result, vast tracts of fertile agricultural lands became unfit for cultivation during the dry season. This has resulted in colossal crop losses while rivers depending on the Ganges are losing navigability for a greater part of the year. Zoologists have said that the number of birds and various forms of marine life in the Ganges basin is dropping. Different species of wild life are also on the path to extinction due to this process. Environmental (?groups) fear a major natural disaster.

Bangladesh has repeatedly asked India to reach a long-term agreement on the sharing of the waters of the Ganges and other common rivers. But India is not responding to this request. Talks to resolve this problem at the bilateral level have failed due to the unfair conditions imposed by New Delhi. Bangladesh wants a permanent water sharing agreement with India in order to ensure its just share of the Ganges River water. The unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges waters by India is a crime against humanity. If this situation continues, then the northwestern districts of Bangladesh will be ultimately converted into desert.

India

India: BJP Rules Out Parliament Dissolution, Congress Coalition

BK2005130696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress and the Third Front are to formally announce the consensus candidate for the Lok Sabha speaker in a couple of days. The decision will be taken after a meeting between the Third Front leader, Mr. Deve Gowda, and the Congress president, Mr. Narasimha Rao. The Janata Dal spokesman, Mr. Jaipal Reddy told newsmen in New Delhi today that MP's belonging to the Third Front will meet in New Delhi tomorrow and formally elect Mr. Gowda as their leader.

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] president, Mr. L.K. Advani, says his party had accepted the president's invitation to form the government at the center as it felt that declining it would mean shying away from the responsibility given by the people's mandate. In an exclusive interview to PTI in New Delhi, he said that the BJP is mobilizing majority support, mainly from the regional groups, and hoped that with their cooperation the party will be able to win the vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha.

When asked about the possibility of coalition with the Congress, the BJP leader said that the mandate is a categoric rejection of the Congress, so the question of coalition with that party does not arise.

The party spokesman, Mr. Venkaiya Naidu, told media newspersons in Delhi today that the BJP is not wooing any individual, but seeking support on a common minimum program. Mr. Naidu denied reports the Vajpayee government will recommend dissolution of the house if it fails to secure vote of confidence.

The Congress party has alleged that the prime minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has used his address to the nation for party propaganda. The party general secretary, Mr. Divendra Dwevedi, told newsmen in New Delhi today that it was for the first time that the prime minister of the nation mentioned the name of the party and also made oblique references to non-BJP parties. He said the Indian National Congress has

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decided to complete organizational elections by the end of December this year.

India: Prime Minister Warns of External, Internal 'Threats'

BK2105044596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 21 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has cautioned the people to guard against the prevailing external and internal threats the nation is facing. Addressing a rally in Ahmadabad yesterday evening, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee expressed grave concern over the deteriorating situation in Assam and also in neighboring Bangladesh and asked people to remain alert. The prime minister said that his government is determined to root out corruption from all walks of life and, as the first step, the members of his cabinet will declare their properties within a month. Appreciating the problems of the farmers of Gujarat and Maharashtra, Mr. Vajpayee announced that both the states will now be permitted to export 50,000 bales of cotton each.

Earlier, Mr. Vajpayee was given a warm welcome on his arrival. He was received at the airport by the governor, Mr. S.P. Singh; the chief minister, Mr. S.C. Mehta; and other leaders. He drove straight to Gandhi ashram [hermitage] and paid tribute to the father of the nation.

India: Delhi Reports Parties' Views on Political Situation

BK2005160896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The West Bengal chief minister has reiterated that the Third Front would not go into any coalition with the Congress at the center if it forms a government. Addressing a press conference in Calcutta today, he said the front would take the party support from outside. He also dismissed that there would be any impact in West Bengal in the event of the NF-LF [National Front- Left Front] forming a government with the help of the Congress.

The Tamil Maanila Congress [TMC] president, Mr. G.K. Moopanar, asserted that the party continues to be a part of the Third Front. Talking to newspersons in Madras, he said the TMC is yet to take a decision on joining the government in the event of the front forming the government.

The Janata Dal leader, Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde, has asserted that the coalition arrangement on the basis of a common agenda should have been worked out before the Lok Sabha polls to get a clear mandate. Participating in a meet the press program in Bangalore today, he was of the opinion that the post-election arrangements of the Third Front and joining hands with the Congress might be considered opportunistic by the people. Mr. Hegde cited the case of the BJP forging an alliance with the Shiv Sena, the Haryana Vikas Party, the Samata Party, and the Akali Dal before the polls and said it does not create any confusion. The Janata Dal also raised doubts about the durability of such a post-poll coalition arrangement.

India: Third Front Postpones Election of Parliamentary Leader

BK2105100696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 21 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The formal election of Karnataka Chief Minister Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda as the leader of the Third Front's parliamentary group has been postponed for tomorrow. Meeting of MP's of the constituent partners, which held a meeting in New Delhi today, also could not finalize their stand on the consensus candidate for the Lok Sabha speaker as many senior leaders could not reach the capital. Speaking to newspersons informally after the meeting, the Andhra Pradesh chief minister, Mr. Chandrababu Naidu, claimed that the front has the support of 194 MP's. Our correspondent understands that the United Front may support the candidature of former Information and Broadcasting Minister Mr. P.A. Sangma or Mr. P.M. Sayeed for the post of Lok Sabha speaker.

Meanwhile, reports say that Mr. Deve Gowda today met the Congress president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, and is understood to have finalized the consensus candidate for the speaker.

India: Interview With Third Front Leader on Political Situation

BK2005082296 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 18 May 96 p 11

[Interview with Karnataka Chief Minister Deve Gowda by Smita Gupta in New Delhi on 17 May; first two paragraphs THE TIMES OF INDIA introduction]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Just a month go Haradanahalli Doddegowda [HD] Deve Gowda had said in an interview that if the Janata Dal did well in Karnataka all he hoped for was a better deal for his state from the Centre. He said that he did not consider himself a kingmaker far less a king. But today he has made the giant leap from being chief minister of Karnataka to that of the Third Front's prime minister-designate.

For a man who was dubbed a "perpetual dissident" by the press till he achieved a lifelong ambition of becoming chief minister in 1993 these are heady days. But the

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caution and circumspection that are the hallmarks of HD Deve Gowda were visible even on the day — May 15 — when everyone considered that it was a matter of hours before he would receive a call from Rashtrapati Bhavan. Asked how he felt, he said, "I am the same man — in the same dhoti and Kurta [Indian traditional dress]. I treat joy and sorrow spontaneously." But when the joy turned to sorrow — when Atal Behari Vajpayee was called to form the government — the Vokkaliga strong man did not lose heart, but stayed on to draw up an action plan to "thwart the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and communal forces".

Q: The Congress has promised to support the Third Front. What is the nature of this support will the Congress be part of the coalition or will it support the Front from outside? There have also been reports that even if the support is from outside, the Congress has imposed several conditions.

A: The Congress has written to President Shanker Dayal Sharma extending support to us — it is unconditional support from outside. The Congress has not imposed any conditions and there is no talk of a coalition.

Q: If the Bharatiya Janata Party government fails to prove its majority on the floor of the House and you are called to form a government, what sort of economic policy will the Third Front have? You have been active in inviting foreign investment to your state and are seen as pro-liberalisation.

A: I do not wish to talk about economic issues at present — they can only be talked about after May 31. It would be premature now. Besides, I cannot give you a personal view — a common view has to be adopted. Let the constitutional process unfold. Let the BJP's majority be tested on the floor of the House. If it is voted out, then it is up to the president who he invites after that. Your question is not relevant at the moment. Our further course of action will be decided after that.

Q: If one is to go by your record in Karnataka, the changes in the Land Ceiling Act have been a bit controversial — for the Left parties, land reforms and the welfare of farmers is primary.

A: I have not made any basic change in the Land Ceiling Act. Minimum changes have been made to provide land for industry. I do not anticipate any problems.

Q: The Third Front has formed a steering committee in which all constituent parties are represented. Will this steering committee be a precursor to a coordination committee if a coalition government is eventually formed?

A: We have taken certain measures including setting up a steering committee for the smooth functioning of the various secular parties that have come together and to coordinate steps to be taken to outvote the BJP. But running a government is an altogether different matter — I can't say anything till the present government is voted out.

Q: Are you confident that your group of 180 will stay intact?

A: There is no need to do so. I'm sorry that people draw the conclusion that all politicians are saleable commodities. I will not attribute such motives to them. And, incidentally, it is no longer 180 — it is now 194 — various small parties from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, etc. have also pledged their support to the Third Front.

Q: Have you approached the Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP] for support?

A: I have not approached the BSP for support.

Q: Would you consider the results of this election as a mandate for federalism?

A: This has been a mandate for a coalition government. This is the first time in the history of the country that a real coalition government will be installed, as no party or group has been given a clear mandate.

India: United Left Front Assumes Office in Kerala

BK2005175896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Kerala, a 14-member CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist]-led Left Democratic Front ministry headed by Mr. E.K. Nayanar was sworn in in Thiruvananthapuram this evening. The governor, Mr. Khurshid Alam Khan, administered the oath of office and secrecy to the chief minister and other ministers at the colorful function in Raj Bhawan [governor's house]. The ministry has seven CPI-M nominees which includes the chief minister, three members from CPI, and one each from Janata Dal, Congress-S, RSP [Revolutionary Socialist Party] and Kerala Congress.

India: Impact of China-U.S. Trade War Viewed

BK2005091696 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 18 May 96 p 11

[Editorial: "Sino-U.S. Trade War"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The trade war between the United States and China has formally begun with both countries announcing punitive tariff on imports from the other. The formal announcement of U.S. trade sanctions

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and Chinese retaliation through freezing of approvals for American ventures on the mainland follow the failure of talks between the two countries on Beijing's inability to protect U.S. copyrights on computer software, movies and CD records. In net terms, the measures which will take effect in June will affect goods worth about $3 billion on each side. The commodities to suffer include automobiles, cameras and films, cosmetics, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes and video-game cards from the U.S., and electronic goods, apparel, footwear and toys from China. It is difficult to believe that the two governments would finally let the dispute roll over the precipice. There have been several occasions in the past when Washington and Beijing have indulged in sabre- rattling, more as an exercise of playing to the gallery than with any serious resolve. The present dispute may not turn out to be different whatever the obvious impressions.

In substantiation of that conclusion is recent U.S. attitude over China's sale of ring magnets to Pakistan aimed at boosting the latter's nuclear capability. China denied that there was any deal that violated its non-proliferation commitments, and the U.S. characteristically found clinching evidence inadequate and let Beijing off the hook. The trade sanctions Washington has just now announced appear more to assuage feelings of American producers claiming copyrights for their commodities than to actually punish China. In an election year, the Clinton administration cannot afford not to protect the perceived interests of American companies and the job they generate and protect. At the same time, American job-holders would suffer if exports to China were to fall drastically and frozen approvals for U.S. ventures in China held up the spectre of ruined business. However ominous the Sino-U.S. trade war may appear, it is more likely to turn out to be cold war than something more serious on the ground. The threat of a disruption of $6 billion to $10 billion in trade is not unmanageable. The war of words and sanctions may become really menacing only if postures are insufficient in securing a bargain. Both the U.S. and East Asia, of which China is as important as Japan, need each other. Their love- hate relationship is good drama for outsiders, but not a serious cause for worry. At least not as yet.

The most important and difficult problem India is likely to face would be terrorism, and organised crime-politician bureaucracy nexus which have foreign linkages. The present elections may generate some misleading signals to the enemies of this country who have always maintained that Indian unity was artificial and could not be sustained for long. The reverses of the Congress party, the rise in the influence of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the regional parties and the formation of a minority or a coalition government in the Centre are likely to be misinterpreted as signs of loosening up of Indian unity and the beginning of the disintegration process long dreamt of by those who never wanted Indian democratic experiment to succeed. The Election results have demonstrated that Indian unity is stronger than ever before and every state while attempting to assert its identity and enlargement of federalism has indicated its strong stakes in influencing the formation of the Central government. New strata of populations have been empowered demonstrating their upward mobility without too much of tension. The realisation of the economic growth potential of India has led to an increasing assertion of healthy nationalism.

Political Rivalry

Unfortunately parochial political rivalries among our own parties tend to misinterpret these signals and fit them into the familiar western pattern of increasing religious and social tensions. That picture may be seen as an opportunity for external adversaries to initiate various activities which would exacerbate tensions in our country. There is a widespread feeling that the new coalition, or minority go- eminent arrangement, would not last long and there will be another election in the next two years. This perception may induce various politicians to start looking for funds to prepare for the next elections.

Without radical reforms in the electoral process itself, ceilings on election expenditure after the poll process begins are not likely to be wholly effective in curbing the impact of money power in the elections. Therefore the need for funds for elections not very far away may lead to laxity on the part of our politicians in regard to inflow of money from outside and associated with it arms and terrorists. The fact that various state governments are ruled by parties other than the government at the Centre may tempt our adversaries to probe weaknesses in our security vigilance in different states and make full use of them. These considerations highlight the imperative need for constituting a national security council with an adequate full time core staff to enable it to function effectively.

India: Foreign Policy Priorities Highlighted

BK1805145396 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 17 May 96 p 10

[Article by K. Subrahmanyam: "External Environment"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has faced a hostile international environment during times of internal governmental changes. When the government changed in 1989

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the Kashmir situation exploded thanks to the machinations of our neighbour. Immediately following that came the threat of a war — whether genuine or contrived is immaterial — and the projection of an associated nuclear crisis which was wholly bogus. The purpose of the crisis was to apply pressure on this country. It is difficult to say at this stage, on the basis of publicly available evidence whether that pressure would have been stepped up and sustained if it were not for the Kuwaiti crisis created by Mr Saddam Hussein.

Change of Government

The change of government in June 1991 was also followed by pressures on India on the nuclear issue and the proposals for a five nation conference on the same subject. In 1977 this country was fortunate when the very first discontinuous governmental change occurred. Simultaneously there was a major government change in the US. There were changes in the regime in Pakistan and in Sri Lanka. Consequently, the pressure was less than what it could have been. This is the real truth underlying the relatively amicable relations with our neighbours during that period and not any innovations in our foreign policy as some claim.

Once again the country is to have a new government and this time the external environment calls for much greater vigilance. One of the basic weaknesses in our national security decision making is our inability to assess the international environment in advance and prepare the country to face likely adverse developments. The easy going tendency of the Indian security establishment invariably leads to drifting till the external events leave us with no choice but to respond. Belated responses can only be of less than full effectiveness to meet the challenge. If the new government follows the traditional decision making style the country may not have to wait long before it will be subject to pressures and challenges.

Having successfully held two out of six parliamentary elections in Kashmir one must anticipate that Pakistan will do everything possible to wreck the elections for the other four seats. The efforts to wreck the elections can range from terrorist acts in the constituencies going to the polls, to attempts at massive infiltration's across the line of control, to deliberately raising interstate tension. Pakistani efforts to destabilise the situation in Kashmir may not stop with the end of elections. They are likely to continue beyond that for several reasons. First, Pakistan is more interested in sabotaging the assembly elections than the Parliamentary ones. Therefore the Pakistanis would continue the campaign of disruption beyond the present poll. Second, they and their supporters would like to make out a strong case for international observers for the state assembly poll. Third, Pakistan would like to assist the US in applying pressure on India on the Comprehensive Test Ban issue and consequently to focus attention on the nuclear issue. Fourth, Pakistan may also attempt to blackmail US by threatening that the Indo-Pakistan nuclear confrontation might get out of hand.

In the US there are possibilities of two alternative approaches towards India. A less sophisticated and more traditional line would be to step up pressure on India in the hope that a new coalition government can be easily pressured into falling in line with US policy. All the positive and negative leverages US can wield vis-a-vis the Indian polity, Indian business community and the Indian politicians will be brought into play to persuade India to fall in line on the nuclear and missile issues. The second alternative is a more sophisticated but less likely policy which would recognise that putting pressure on a newly formed coalition government would be counter productive and would harden Indian resistance. While perhaps both lines would be urged by the respective schools the final decision will depend upon the resoluteness the new government displays on the issue and whether it chooses to continue along the traditional line of keeping the nuclear policy as the prime Minister's private preserve, or, involve Parliament into a declaration of a national commitment on the issue.

Cordial Relation

Barring Pakistan and the US no other external pressures are likely on India. Our relations with all other neighbours including China are improving. Japan, South-East Asia, Western Europe, Russia and the Arab countries are likely to display increasing interest in fostering economic and political relations with this country. Irrespective of the campaign and post-campaign rhetoric of political parties the economic reforms are by and large irreversible. Most of the problems have arisen because of attempts to extend adhocism into decision making on international contracts as was being done in respect of national contracts during the permit-quota-license Raj.

India: Business Community Welcomes Finance Minister's Statements

BK1905092796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The industry sectors welcomed the finance minister's statement that the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] government will honor the contractual obligations committed by the previous government. Leading chambers of commerce and industry have said that this sends positive signals about security

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for foreign investors. They said Mr. Jaswant Singh's observations that interest rates are very high show that the government has recognized the existence of liquidity crisis in the market.

The president of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, FICCI, Mr. Deepak Banker, feels that business houses are happy to note that the government is committed to channeling foreign direct investment into the infrastructure sector such as power, telecom, and development of ports.

There were many flaws in the economic policy pursued by the P.V. Narasimha Rao government. It was highly insensitive to the feverish increase in income disparities and the plight of those left out in the cold by the reforms. Politically, it was indifferent to the gross abuse of all kinds of discretionary powers by ministers and the immense harm done by the series of scandals defrauding the public of staggering sums.

The main opposition groups, meanwhile, did what they could to speed up the decay of the political system by keeping up the pretence that there were no constraints on policy making, both internal and external, by splintering the national polity into even smaller fragments and by inciting demands which made any kind of social discipline impossible.

While the BJP was blind to the danger of alienating all the minorities by the way it sought to identify Hindutva with Indian nationalism, the CPI(M) went on cynically exploiting the hardships implicit in a difficult transition period.

These two, with a helping hand from ethnic, casteist and regional groups, have now brought about a situation in which no effective government is possible. This admission is implicit in the decision of the central committee of the CPI(M) to stick to its decision not to join any government formed by the so called third force, even while promising support to it from outside.

It is apparent the CPI(M) wants no direct share of the odium which, it fears such a regime will inevitably earn. Nor will its leaders feel too comfortable in the company of the lump en elements some of which are bound to worm their way into top positions. Outnumbered by its shifty allies and under constant pressure from the Congress, the party cannot but lose face.

It will be suicidal for the Congress in the circumstances to wait for a chance to form a ruling coalition under its own auspices. The most sensible course for it will be to sit coolly and watch the two political formations, going about as viable alternative to it, to discredit themselves in the public eye even more thoroughly than in 1979 or in 1989. It can determine its stand on every contentious issue in the light of its own policy commitments.

That the National Front has plumped for H.D. Deve Gowda as its leader betrays its desperation for he is hardly cut out for the kind of exacting role he would have to play in keeping a ragtag team together.

It is likely in the new circumstances that the president will first ask Atal Behari Vajpayee, as the leader of the largest single party in the new Lok Sabha, to form the government. This too, in its own way, will be a more sobering experience for the BJP than it imagines.

Whether it can get the support of another 70 to 75 members it needs to make a tally of 269 is still pretty doubtful. But even if it manages to buy over some members and persuade many others to join the ruling coalition, with offers of a larger share of the spoils of office than their due or promises of policy concessions, it will have the same kind of problems which a National Front led ruling coalition will face.

Its experience with Bahujan Samaj Party leaves no room for any make believe on this score. And it can have no illusions about a smooth working relationship even with the Samata group after the reservations spelt out by George Fernandes the other day, not to speak of the Akali Dal, with its record of sneaking sympathy for the militant groups in the past and talk of a panthic state.

In fact, the composition of the new Lok Sabha being what it is, no arrangement can dispel the twin spectres of instability and uncertainty that will haunt the political scene from now on with even more grim consequences than before. For a government exposed all the time to contrary pulls from its own party men at home will also become, by this very logic, more vulnerable to external pressure.

A government formed under such auspices cannot last for very long and in any case, has to live in daily fear of its career being cut short at any moment. It can be a chastening experience only to the extent it makes the major parties more keenly aware of the dangers than beset the country, persuades them to pipe down and realise that the only way to manage change in this country and ensure growth with equity is through a determined search for a broader national consensus.

If they do not heed the warnings they will be in for greater shocks. In fact, even a short spell of political instability at the Centre can wipe off the precarious economic gains the country has made in the last two years, send the prices spiralling up and bring down the rate of growth. Still worse, it can poison political relationships further and confront the country with the dreadful prospect of parliamentary elections at

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short intervals resulting in more and more ambiguous verdicts. There is no lack of instances in this troubled century of how apathy and cynicism, bred in tuck circumstances, can end up by rotting the very nerve and bone of public life.

India: Article Writer Fears for Economic Gains

BK1805141896 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 16 May 96 p 8

[Article by Sham Lal: "The Hounds of Fate"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] However different their public stances, in spirit or in substance, on the transition to a market economy, the main parties have had no qualms in pushing the country towards a more frenzied form of market driven politics. What hits the eye in the post-election scene is the runaway inflation in the prices of support the two main contenders for power, the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] on the right and the Left Front-National Front on the left, need to muster even an unstable majority in the new Lok Sabha.

The Congress has received the severest drubbing of its career at the hands of the voters in the recent elections due to the incredible folly of its leadership in clinging to Jayalalitha Jayaram's party, in the teeth of opposition from its own men in Tamil Nadu, in slyly encouraging factionalism in some of its own state units and allowing top people in the establishment to nurse for so long the idea that they were above the law. Yet, it is by no means a spent force.

It has managed, in the face of terrible odds, to hold itself together and dash the hope of the chief contestants for power at the Centre that the trauma of defeat will split the party. The elections have in fact made short work of the twin myths that the voters would either give the BJP a clear mandate to run the government in New Delhi or enough seats to the Left Front-National Front combine in the Lok Sabha to form a stable non-Congress, non-BJP ruling coalition.

The irony of the post-election scene is that, with its 136 seats in the new Lok Sabha, the Congress will still be in a crucial position to influence, if not determine, the character of any ruling coalition. For, neither the BJP and its allies, who are short of a majority by 75 seats, nor the Left Front-National Front combine, which needs the support of another 150 members or so, can do without its support in keeping afloat any government.

With instability hunt into any possible ruling coalition at the Centre, it is easy to understand why the purists on either end of the political spectrum, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] on the left and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS] on the right, feel so downhearted. The CPI(M)'s stubborn refusal to join any government led by its own allies and proteges is an admission that, subject to all kinds of pulls from different directions, it cannot have its way in such a setup.

The reservation by the RSS about the propriety of the BJP's anxiety to form a government at any cost, however dubious the credentials of those who join it, voices the same fear. The scepticism on either side is not without an ironical twist of its own. For, in frantically trying to garner support, irrespective of how tainted the source happens to be, the leaders of the second and third forces have had no compunction in eating their words and making policy compromises even before assuming power.

The hounds of fate, unnoticed by the media, have made nonsense of the ideas of purity and pollution which a new breed of maverick Manus have been trying to extend to political life. The left's strategy of treating both the Congress and the BJP as political pariahs now lies in ruins.

Unfortunately, the CPI(M) and its cohorts have got so used by now to looking complacently at the wreckage of so many models of development they sought to sell to the country for almost half a century that they do not seem to care.

Some in the Congress may be making reassuring noises that their party's support to secular forces will be unconditional. The hardened men of the CPI(M), however, are too canny a bunch of customers not to know that in market driven politics, support does not ever come free. It is not unusual for extremely scarce goods not to carry a price tag. The charm of the semi-bourgeois radicals is not very different from that of the bourgeoisie who often do business through small hints and little nods.

If Jyoti Basu has managed to remain head of the ruling coalition in West Bengal for almost two decades, it is because the CPI(M) has had a clear majority in the state assembly on its own. It is his party's dominating position which has made it possible for him to tame wilder partners and reduce the scope for blackmail or undue pressure by junior partners in the coalition.

Managing a hotchpotch ruling coalition at the Centre, making secret deals with a dozen disparate groups on contentious issues and resisting pressure from the Congress which cannot alienate its own state units which regard the CPI(M), the Janata Dal or the Samajwadi Party as its main enemies, without risking further cracks in its already damaged structure, will be an altogether more daunting and nerve wracking job.

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Any party, unless its only chance of a brush with power lies in an inherently unstable ruling coalition, can now see what the country is in for. No prime minister, however astute, can run for long the kind of government that will be cobbled together in the next few days.

It is true that no newly elected member, whatever his professed ideology, will be in too great a hurry to bring the new government down and cut short his own parliamentary career Even so, resentments at not having received their due share of the spoils o office or at not having been able to wrest the kind of policy concession they banked upon, will make its jot increasingly difficult.

Yet, this is no lack of political morons who regard the election results as a sign of political maturity. Such a claim can pass muster only in a country used to long periods of near anarchy or among ideologues who have no trouble in convincing themselves that the high growth rates registered first by China, and more recently by Vietnam, mark a victory for Marxism. This has made these two countries so attractive to multinational investors.

India: Finance Minister Reports No Change in Foreign Investment Policy

BK2105061396 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 20 May 96 p 11

[Editorial: "It's Welcome, But..."]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Just to prove that he shares with his predecessor more than only the surname, the new BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] Finance Minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, has declared that there would be no change in the government's policy towards foreign direct investment (FDI). In fact, he has said more. Mr Jaswant Singh expects FDI to grow from $2 billion a year to $4 billion. Already known as the great enthusiast of the Rao government's economic reforms from among the Opposition benches, Mr Jaswant Singh's eloquence would seem to extend beyond mere routine assurances to overseas investors. The finance minister probably is conscious that he needs to present an attractive economic face of the BJP, as Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee has to project a secular face of the party to reap richer political harvests. But in committing himself to a faster pace of economic reforms than what the earlier government had initiated, Mr Jaswant Singh shows an awareness that the BJP finance minister must say something that distinguishes the new government from the previous one. He has, therefore, come up with the bottom-line observation that the economic situation in the country is not good. Despite this disturbing diagnosis, he has been unable to identify his priorities differently from Dr Manmohan Singh, namely reduction of fiscal deficit and inflation and stabilisation of the currency value of the rupee. In his undistinguishable approach in essence, Mr Jaswant Singh's hope of raising the GDP growth rate by 2 percent and doubling the FDI amounts to an invitation to overseas investors to trust that the BJP government would go far beyond the Rao regime to welcome MNC's [Multinational Corporations].

Probably Prime Minister Vajpayee needs to do everything to assure foreign investors that their interests are safe under the BJP whose "swadeshi" [economic self-reliance] noises often cause much confusion. However, it would be a good convention for the new government not to rush into making policy statements. After all, a prime minister on test is barely on firmer ground than a caretaker prime minister. Both draw their authority from Parliament, and till such time as a prime minister has proved that he enjoys the confidence of the Lok Sabha, his government should refrain from making policy commitments. Mr Vajpayee himself has been discreet. But what an oddity to see his Law Minister, Mr Ram Jethmalani, declaring that he would seek the Supreme Court's permission to prosecute Mr Narasimha Rao. And, this on a day when Mr Vajpayee goes to call on Mr Rao. In the first place, the induction of Mr Jethmalani, who left the BJP some time ago, into the ministry is in itself a bit of a mystery. If one were to read the meaning of Mr Pramod Mahajan's resolve to increase the defence budget, one is likely to be assailed by a nagging suspicion whether the BJP government is influenced by an extra-constitutional source of authority. It would be a sad story if Mr Vajpayee's personal image were to suffer as a consequence.

India: Kashmir Police Arrest 'Most Wanted Terrorist'

BK1905165096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The task force of Jammu and Kashmir police has arrested the most wanted terrorist of Srinagar, Ghulam Nabi Wani, alias Sohail. He was involved in a number of bomb blasts in the valley besides killing of a number of surrendered militants in Srinagar. The state director general of police, Mr. M.N. Sabharwal, has announced a cash reward of one lakh rupees to police party which arrested him.

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India: Situation in Violence-Hit Assam Areas Updated

BK2005052696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Assam, the situation in the violence- hit Kokrajhar District is reported to be under control. According to official sources in Guwahati, no fresh incident has been reported from any part of the district since last night. Thirty-four bodies have so far been recovered from different parts of the district. The Assam paramilitary forces are patrolling around the clock in the affected areas. The curfew was relaxed during the day yesterday in Gossaigaon area. An all-party delegation yesterday visited the relief camps in Kokrajhar where the affected people have taken shelter. The delegation members assured the inmates of the camps of all protection.

As already reported, two senior officials from the Defense and Home Ministries are being sent to the violence-affected areas to review the situation. The Assam government has set up a commission of inquiry to probe the violence in Kokrajhar District. The chief minister, Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mohanta, has appealed to the people to live in peace and amity.

Meanwhile, the state police have arrested seven persons in connection with the killing of Mr. Paragkumar Das, editor of a language daily in Guwahati on Friday. Police have also announced a reward of 1 lakh rupees to anyone providing information about the killers of the Tinsukhia District Superintendent of Police and the former minister, Mr. Nagen Neog. Meanwhile, the National Union of Journalists of India has demanded a CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] inquiry into the killing.

India: Security Tightened in Assam Against 12-Hour Strike

BK2105044996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 21 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Assam, security measures have been tightened all over the state in view of the 12-hour bundh [strike] today. The bundh has been called by the outlawed United Liberation Front of Assam — ULFA — and the Manav Adhikar Sangram Samiti [Committee Fighting for Human Rights] in protest against the recent killing of the editor of an Assamese daily, PARAG KUMAR DAS. The government has warned the employees of disciplinary action, if they absent from their duties during the bundh.

Meanwhile, the situation in the violence-hit Kokrajhar District is peaceful. According to official sources, no fresh incident has been reported during the last three days and normalcy is slowly returning. The curfew during the daytime has been relaxed; however, security forces are constantly keeping vigil over the situation. A meeting of the district-level peace committee comprising all sections of people has been convened today. The situation in Bongaigaon District is, however, stated to be tense, but under control. Night curfew clamped yesterday evening in Sidli police station area has been extended for the day today.

Iran

Iran: Kuwaiti Parliament Speaker Arrives in Tehran 18 May

LD1805155996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1430 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The speaker of the Kuwaiti parliament [Ahmad 'Abd-al-'Aziz Jasim al-Sa'dun] arrived in Tehran today and was welcomed by Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri. On arrival, the Kuwaiti speaker stressed the importance of maintaining security in the Persian Gulf region and said: It is the responsibility of all the countries of the region to pave the way for security in the area through the expansion and consolidation of ties and cooperation.

Ahmad 'Abd-al-'Aziz Jasim al-Sa'dun spoke of cooperation between the two countries' parliaments as a factor contributing to the expansion of ties. He stated: Any dissension or discord is to the detriment of the countries of the region.

Mr. Nateq-Nuri, for his part, described visits by senior officials from regional countries as very important and stressed the need for security to be provided by the countries of the region themselves.

Iran: Velayati, Kuwaiti Speaker Discuss Ties, Security, Lebanon

LD1905110996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting this morning with Foreign Minister Velayati, Mr. Ahmad 'Abd-al-'Aziz Jasim al-Sa'dun, Kuwaiti parliament speaker, said he was happy about the expansion of relations between the two countries. He noted the extensive ties between Iran and Kuwait and said these relations could be considered as an appropriate model for the rest of the countries in the region.

He condemned the Zionist regime's recent attacks on Lebanon and said he had personally visited the Kana slaughterhouse the day after it was bombed and saw for himself the depth of the savage crimes committed by the Zionists in their killing of innocent people.

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He expressed dissatisfaction at the silence maintained by international forums, saying: Unfortunately, the world of Islam — especially the Arab world — did not react to these aggressions in the manner that it could and should have.

Mr. Velayati, for his part, considered the exchange of trips between the two countries' senior officials contributed to increasing relations between them. He emphasized the need for exchanges of views between the officials of both countries on ways of expanding security cooperation and strengthening the climate of trust.

He expressed appreciation at the participation of Kuwait's senior delegation in the inauguration ceremony of the Mashhad-Sarakh-Tezhen railway and said Iran was prepared to provide the facilities for all the countries of the region to use the Bandar-Abbas-Mashhad-Sarakhs- Tezhen rail link.

Mr. Velayati referred to America's support for the Zionist regime and described Israel as the arch enemy of the world of Islam. He said Muslim countries should not take lightly the dangers of Zionist influence in the region.

Iran: Rafsanjani Holds Talks With Kuwaiti Speaker

LD2005123696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr Ahmad al-Sa'dun, speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, who is visiting Iran at the head of a delegation from that country's parliament, was received by President Hashemi- Rafsanjani today. The speaker of the Kuwaiti parliament described the stance adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran during the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq as noble and kind, and added: This principled stance and Iran's political and humanitarian assistance after the occupation of Kuwait is viewed as very valuable and precious by our people and government. He conveyed his country's interest in strengthening ties and engaging in all-encompassing cooperation with Iran.

At the meeting, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani welcomed the expansion of ties, as well as regional and international cooperation with the neighboring countries of the Persian Gulf, especially Kuwait, and said: Consolidating and expanding Islamic solidarity and fraternity has consistently been of importance to the Islamic Republic of Iran. He described the presence of a law-making parliament in Kuwait as a useful point in strengthening parliamentary cooperation between Iran and Kuwait, and consequently in expanding bilateral ties further. He also declared Iran's willingness to play a more active role in construction and development projects in Kuwait.

Iran: Majles Deputy Holds Talks With Kuwaiti Parliament Speaker

LD2005124596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abd-al-'Aziz Ahmad al-Sa'dun, speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, met with Hojjat ol-Eslam Alavi, Majles deputy and the head of the parliamentary friendship group between Iran and Kuwait, today. At this meeting, Mr. Sa'dun expressed pleasure about visiting Iran and meeting distinguished personalities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He described relations between the two countries in various fields as positive and called for the expansion of bilateral ties in all areas.

The speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly spoke of the good coordination between the two countries in international organizations and called for greater cooperation between Iran and Kuwait regarding the establishment of an Islamic inter-parliamentary organization.

Iran: Nateq-Nuri, Kuwaiti Speaker Discuss VOA Station in Kuwait

LD2005201896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly left Tehran at the end of his three-day visit to our country. He was formally seen off by the Majles speaker ['Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri].

Mr. Ahmad 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Sa'dun expressed his happiness about his visit to our country. He foresaw a good future for the relations between Iran and Kuwait.

In reply to a question by our correspondent about Kuwait having placed a radio station at America's disposal, he said the reason for it was an agreement between Kuwait and America a few years ago. He said he was unaware of the contents of the programs of the Voice of America.

Mr. Nateq-Nuri said political issues in the relations between the two countries were of special importance. He stressed the necessity of maintaining the security of the Persian Gulf through cooperation between regional countries. He said: To reach their goals, America and the Zionist regime attempt to make that out the region is unsafe and capitalize on it.

He referred to the placing of the Voice of America station on Kuwaiti soil. He stressed: America's use of the transmitter against us is intolerable. Undoubtedly, it

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would also be intolerable to the Kuwaiti authorities for such actions to have an adverse effect on our relations.

Iran: Official on Ties With Lebanon, Hizballah

NC2005125696 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 17 May 96 pp 5, 7

[Interview with Mohammad Kazem Khonsari, director general of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, by Rula Muwaffaq, at the Iranian Embassy in Beirut; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Muwaffaq] During the Israeli aggression there were extensive Iranian moves toward Lebanon. What is the significance of this?

[Khonsari] Lebanese-Iranian relations go back a long way. Historically there has been a cultural link and mutual influence between the two countries. After Iran became an Islamic state under Imam Khomeyni's leadership it adopted a very clear attitude to the hostile Israeli plans for the region. This fostered ties of brotherhood between Iran and Lebanon and Syria because they have a distinctive stance, different from the other cordon states. The Iranian people harbor special affection for the Lebanese people. We were much affected by the Lebanese people's troubles during their domestic strife. Our sympathy is not limited to one sect, but extends to the entire Lebanese people with all its Muslim and Christian sects. Lebanese Muslim brothers made several visits to Iran and Christian brothers including Maronites, Armenians, and Orthodox Christians also visited Iran. Recently Patriach Aram Kishishyan paid us a visit. Bishop Khalil Abu-Nadir visited us often. We feel sincere respect and amity for them all. Of course we have relations with the Muslim Shiite and Sunni sects and their prominent figures. The reason for this explanation is to demonstrate that our relationship is with the entire Lebanese people, not one sect. This does not preclude the fact that some brothers have greater links with us and visit us more often. It is natural for our Muslim brothers to visit Iran more often than our Christian brothers. No one expects the frequency of these visits and meetings to be the same but this does not mean we prefer one sect over another. We want to emphasize that we respect every Lebanese sect and wish to see the Lebanese people united. We wish to see Lebanese unity evident and we want Lebanon to establish its sovereignty over all its territory. This is why we meet all the officials whenever we visit Lebanon, the Christian president, the Shiite speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, and the Sunni prime minister. Sometimes I get the chance to meet Muslim and Christian spiritual figures.

[Muwaffaq] You are trying to explain that you do not distinguish among the various segments of the Lebanese people. But it is evident that Iran is backing one Lebanese religious stream on the grounds that it is religiously and ideologically linked with the Iranian revolution. I mean Hizballah. Now you are being criticized for your unlimited backing for Hizballah. Is this why you have given this long explanation in support of the entire Lebanese nation?

[Khonsari] No, it is not an explanation to refute an accusation. Accusations do not affect us. What I said expresses a fact and a conviction on our part. But if one particular sect harbors more affection for Iran, then that is natural. This happens everywhere, even in personal relationships. But it does not make Iran biased toward one particular Lebanese sect in its general policy on Lebanon, which seeks to promote Lebanese interests and strengthen Lebanon as a whole.

[Muwaffaq] The Iranian Government and private Iranian institutions used to provide assistance, mainly to Hizballah. Today we find that Iran wants to help Lebanon through official channels. Why the transformation?

[Khonsari] It is natural to have greater cooperation if the two governments' friendship grows stronger. We have always been willing to establish close official ties with Lebanon. This is why we formed the joint economic cooperation committee. Perhaps it will meet in the next few months and will be the cornerstone for official cooperation between the two countries. But I wish to state that our backing for one particular group is always exaggerated while our assistance to the remaining groups is belittled. This is done for objectives serving those who disseminate such reports.

[Muwaffaq] We can see no evidence of your assistance to other groups, yet your backing for Hizballah is unlimited. You have referred to a joint cooperation committee and Iran's desire to foster close formal ties with Lebanon. Was there caution on one side or the other preventing stronger ties in the past?

[Khonsari] This is not the first time we have extended aid to the Lebanese Government. During the seven-day war in 1993 we aided the government through official channels. The media reported this but you have perhaps forgotten. As for your statement that our backing of Hizballah is unlimited I wish to point out that we constantly proclaim our backing for any party that resists the Israeli enemy, show great respect for it, and defend it in the political sphere against any attempt to portray it as a terrorist organization. When a country is under occupation it is not the entire country that joins the military campaign against the occupier. A segment of the people does this. Recently we discovered that the whole Lebanese people have become a resistance

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force. I read an article in one of your newspapers saying "We Are All Hizballah." This means that the Lebanese people are demonstrating to the world that they want to resist and liberate their land. If we have shown special affection for a party that resists the occupier to liberate territory, this does not mean we do not respect the others and do not support them. We are behind Lebanon, all of it.

In the realm of official cooperation, the obstacles did not come from us. Ever since the Islamic revolution triumphed, we have been ready for this cooperation. But local circumstances here were different. When the government and authority were stabilized here, the ground was prepared for establishing a joint committee for future cooperation.

[Muwaffaq] Have you noticed any Lebanese reservations about Iran's entry into the Lebanese arena?

[Khonsari] I have not heard any remarks suggesting anything like this from the ranking Lebanese officials I met with. However, at the same time I cannot conceal the fact that I understand the pressures certain parties are putting on officials in Lebanon in this regard, particularly the United States with regard to Lebanese-Iranian relations. However, I believe that the Americans do not want strong Lebanese-French relations to exist. In fact, they were extremely unhappy with French President Jacques Chirac's visit to Lebanon. The U.S. displeasure with the French intervention in resolving the recent crisis and stopping the aggression was very clear. This, of course, stems from the nature of the United States, which wants to have unilateral control of the world. Since they have this absolute hostility toward the Islamic Republic, it is only natural for them to try to control us, more so than any other side.

[Muwaffaq] You support the Islamic Resistance in confronting the occupation. There are those who consider this support a kind of Iranian attempt to become a part of the equation in the region, but not through the gateway of peace or the settlement, but through the back door. What is your comment on this?

[Khonsari] Of course we do not support the Lebanese people and their resistance of the Israeli occupation for these considerations. Iran is a big power in the region and has a long history in it. Everyone knows that no party, irrespective of its abilities, ideas, and interests, could arrange things in the region without taking Iran and its opinion into consideration. I do not say this as an Iranian official, but many Western parties have expressed this fact. One of the points of conflict in views the Europeans have with the Americans regarding their dealings in the region is that the Europeans realize that it is impossible to make any arrangements in the region without taking Iran's stance into consideration. Based on this fact, Iran does not need to assume its role in the region through the point you mentioned earlier.

[Muwaffaq] However, to counter the U.S. isolation attempts, you needed an entry point into the region?

[Khonsari] The United States has been trying to isolate Iran for the past 17 years. The Americans previously tried to strike and topple it, and today attempts to isolate it continue, particularly regarding our role in the region in economic affairs. Two days ago, a huge project was finalized in Iran. The inauguration took place with extensive international official attendance; over 50 countries attended. We did not even invite all the countries. We only selected a few. For example, of the region's countries, we invited Syria and Lebanon only. This extensive attendance, which Iran did not see even during the Shah's time, indicates that most countries understand Iran's role and position and that the Americans have not succeeded in their attempts to isolate Iran.

[Muwaffaq] This, however, does not eliminate the U.S. description, which is based on the notion that Iran supports the fundamentalist currents in the region that reject the settlement. What I would like to say here is this: In your opinion, is Iran factored into the equation in the region through its support for the fundamentalist currents, in particular through the Hizballah card in Lebanon and the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] card in the occupied territories?

[Khonsari] No. I believe that Iran's presence in the region is felt as a result of its strategic geographic position there and its authority in all fields.

[Muwaffaq] You attended the talks in Damascus during the Israeli aggression in Lebanon which yielded the April understanding. Iran played a role in these talks. Why has there been no Iranian participation in the two groups that stemmed from the understanding, the monitoring committee and the consultative committee?

[Khonsari] Iran played a basic role in stopping the aggression, but its role was not that of mediator. I should be clearer here. Ever since the beginning, we publicly declared our stand that we support one side against the other. We stood alongside Lebanon and Lebanese rights.

[Muwaffaq] Were you negotiating for Hizballah?

[Khonsari] No. Never.

[Muwaffaq] But not for Lebanon, of course?

[Khonsari] No. We were not negotiating or deputizing for anyone. We were speaking for ourselves.

[Muwaffaq] Where is your position in the equation?

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[Khonsari] Proceeding from a firm belief that the government and people are resisting a regime that constantly attacks their country, we side with the oppressed party. There are also other parties, apart from those with whom we have no official relations, namely, the United States. All the parties that sought to address the crisis contacted us and met with us. This is proof that these parties are aware of Iran's role and status in the region, and that it cannot be isolated. We played a very important role and we did not represent anyone but ourselves. We played our role on the basis of our conviction and status. We did not join the committee monitoring the cease-fire because, first, we were not a mediator and, second, there is a party on the committee — "Israel" — whose legitimacy we do not recognize and with whom we are not prepared to sit down.

[Muwaffaq] In view of the role you have played, how does Iran view the April understanding?

[Khonsari] We view it positively. The understanding and its clauses are clear. However, the statements released by Syria and Lebanon on their stance show that they understand precisely the nature of the goals and that they will not give others any chance to make other arrangements that have absolutely nothing to do with the tasks of the monitoring committee. I think the Israeli and U.S. parties were compelled to accept this understanding and approve of it. I think the reasons for this are: first, the total Lebanese resistance, because Israel was counting on domestic problems — such as divisions between the resistance and the people, between the government and the people, and between the government and the resistance. This did not happen. On the contrary, the Lebanese became more cohesive than before. Second, the Israelis had erroneous views about the length of the battle, which lasted for 16 days, the longest war between the Arabs and Israel. They admitted this. The tables were turned against them, and the resistance emerged unscathed and did not lose a single Katyusha launching pad. Third, the strong presence of other parties forced the Americans to come to the region and, eventually, they, along with the Israelis, were forced to declare their approval of the April understanding. I have heard from a high-level, well-informed Syrian source that Secretary of State Warren Christopher contacted the Syrian foreign minister from Stockholm inquiring about the reason for the presence of the French, Russian, and Italian ministers in Damascus. Of course he did not mention us because U.S. hostility was obvious. In addition, during the first seven days of the aggression, Iran was represented in Damascus by the Iranian foreign minister. Christopher was in the United States and negotiations were conducted by telephone. This time he was forced to come to the region so as not to lose the battle politically to the other parties, including Iran. Therefore, I myself think the understanding is in the interest of the Arabs rather than the aggressor. It is more in the interest of Lebanon than of Israel.

[Muwaffaq] What is the difference between the July understanding and the April understanding?

[Khonsari] There are several differences. The April understanding was a written one, whereas the July understanding was oral. An oral agreement can be given different interpretations but a written one is more accurate and the possibility of misinterpreting it much less. I think one of the characteristics of this understanding is the presence of a French role. This will not enable the United States to act as the sole party in the region. There are clauses in this understanding that reserve the right of the Lebanese people to resist the occupiers and liberate their occupied land, and a committee was set up to monitor the cease-fire. The resistance has consistently adhered to the July understanding. I think the monitoring committee will now limit the possibilities of Israel's attacking Lebanon. I maintain this despite my belief that, given its history, Israel has proved that it does not respect international law, human criteria, world public opinion, or any country — including the United States.

[Muwaffaq] How do you view Iran's role in the region? You have repeatedly emphasized that Iran's influence cannot be ignored, but where does Iran fit in the settlement that some believe will occur and where does it stand outside this settlement?

[Khonsari] First I do not believe that a settlement is likely to happen in the near future. This belief springs from my reading of the policies of the parties involved in the settlement. In my opinion, a settlement cannot be made without the approval of Syria and Lebanon, and I am convinced that the Syrians and Lebanese are not ready to give their consent without the liberation of their territories that are under occupation. I believe that Israel is betting on the surrender of the Lebanese and Syrian sides, while these two are not prepared to fall for the Israeli conspiracies or give in to the U.S. pressure and give up a single inch of their land. President al-Asad has affirmed in several sessions that Israel cannot attain its goals through a settlement if it does not return the Golan and Lebanese territories in full.

I believe it is not easy for the Israeli side to back away from the Golan the way the Syrians want. The strategy Israel has charted for dealing with its Arab neighbors rests on the need to separate them and then handle each one at a time, and unfortunately it has succeeded with some parties. However, it failed to

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establish a rift between the Lebanese and Syrian sides. It wants capitulation, not peace, from the Arabs. It has reached a point where it realizes that it cannot reach its goals—the seizure of territories—under the resistance of some peoples and governments. As a result, it started to change its plans and aim for a Jewish takeover of the region in the economic domain by taking control of the resources available to the region, which are the most important in the entire world. The only barrier left before Israel is the Syrian-Lebanese steadfastness.

[Muwaffaq] Based on the foregoing, do you see a settlement as farfetched?

[Khonsari] I believe that it is unlikely to materialize soon because the Israelis do not want peace.

[Muwaffaq] And when it happens, where would Iran stand?

[Khonsari] Iran, proceeding from its firm policies, will certainly not support the settlement, meaning peace with the Hebrew government, because it is not possible to recognize the legitimacy of this regime. There is a country called Palestine that was occupied unjustly and by force. We have believed from the start, and all signs indicate that we were correct in our reading, that Israel does not want peace, even if it talks about it. The biggest proof of this is the Israeli-Palestinian peace, which will not offer a genuine or fair solution to the Palestinian problem and, accordingly, it will not lead to a real settlement. This is why we did not support it and were not part of it. As to what our role will be should there be a settlement, we had a role in the region before Israel and some of the governments in the region existed. Iran had a role, continues to have a role, and will have a role. But this does not necessarily mean the need to recognize the existence of so and so. Iran has its standing, strategic location, and economic resources and manpower. It does not need to recognize the Israeli regime to continue its role.

[Muwaffaq] Iran is supporting the Islamic movements in the region. Being geographically and demographically remote from the region and in light of its belief that the region's people are united in their Islamic aspirations, is Iran in your view really capable of influencing the proposed settlement in the Middle East and if so how far?

[Khonsari] Our support for those who resist in order to liberate their countries, be they in Palestine or in Lebanon, is not affected by the geographical distance, since it is a moral and political backing. Undoubtedly the Islamic revolution has an influence in enhancing the peoples' awareness and their resistance against injustice. The Islamic revolution was originally a popular revolt against an unjust regime. This philosophy, which is based on the religious and dogmatic foundations of Islam, has influenced many peoples, and this is what they refer to as exporting the revolution. But they are mistaken in their understanding. The export of revolution does not mean that we have financial or military capabilities which we will dispatch. The revolution has led to the awareness of many people and the start of their resistance. For instance, there are some parties in Palestine that have adopted the same beliefs, and certainly we support them, at least in our contacts with the world we explain that there are entities who are resisting in order to liberate their country. As for the talk by the United States and the Hebrew government that Iran is obstructing the peace negotiations, in my opinion this is meant to cover up their schemes and their plan to undermine the Palestinian right in view of the problems they have with the Palestinian people. They also justify their failure to attain their goal—the occupation of the land of Palestine—by talking about foreign interventions.

[Muwaffaq] You indirectly said that Iran has a bearing on the settlement and that it is capable of precluding it according to the Israeli concept because of the awareness that has emerged among some Palestinians and other people who are influenced by the Islamic revolution.

[Khonsari] The Islamic revolution and the Islamic Republic's declared position that it does not recognize Israel and its conspiratorial schemes in the region have had a very strong influence on people's awareness. This awareness definitely obstructs Israel's goals. Hence there is talk about the destructive and negative Iranian role. We are always accused when anything happens, suicide or other operations. But they contradict themselves. They talk about isolating Iran and accuse it of responsibility for everything that happens. This means that Iran is a super state with such a high capability that when the world agrees on a settlement it will not happen just because Iran is opposed to it. I believe that they are talking about the Iranian threat in the place of the communist threat, which they claimed to have done away with, because they cannot live without an enemy.

[Muwaffaq] Do you think that this is the reason, or is there an American attempt to tame Iran, particularly since some analysts believe that the United States realizes the region's need for three pillars: Israel, Turkey, and Iran, but with a different regime and different intellectual dimensions.

[Khonsari] The Iranian people have previous experience with the Americans. They failed to make the people loyal to them. We will certainly not let America draw up our interests in remote places. It is true the United States

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wants to arrange the region according to its interest, but it does not always succeed in doing what it wants. It tried with all its might and failed to prevent the fall of the shah. Our problem with the shah was that as a people we did not want to be just executors of policies and interests planned by the Americans. I sincerely say that I have lived inside the government since the triumph of the Islamic revolution. I see how political decisions are made in Tehran for Iran. We pay no attention to what so and so wants.

[Muwaffaq] You talked of moral support to the fundamentalist movements. Some believe that you support Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. But you do not conceal your financial and military support to Hizballah. There is talk about weapons coming to the resistance from Iran via Syria.

[Khonsari] This is not true.

[Muwaffaq] Is there no military assistance that comes to Hizballah from Iran via Damascus?

[Khonsari] This is an American and Israeli allegation. We give moral support to Hizballah and we have fraternal, ideological, historical, and cultural ties with it. But it is not true that there is military support for the party. They do not lack military capability. Whoever knows the Lebanese arena knows this. Hizballah is a strong organization with experience and expertise stemming from the will to sacrifice. The resistance relies on the spirit of sacrifice more than on material or financial resources. This is what others fail to understand. Israel has all the capabilities. It did not succeed because it does not have the soul of resistance and sacrifice.

[Muwaffaq] Are you denying the financial support to Hizballah as well?

[Khonsari] I denied military support. During my last visit I heard about the popular assistance all the Lebanese provided to Hizballah. An organization with such a status does not need assistance from here and there.

[Muwaffaq] Are there differences between Iran and Syria concerning relations with Hizballah and the support Iran gives to Hizballah and its resistance operations?

[Khonsari] There isn't the slightest difference between the Syrian and Iranian positions on the Lebanese people, including their resistance.

[Muwaffaq] Your foreign minister spoke about developing Hizballah's political role in Lebanon. What did he mean by this?

[Khonsari] We believe that the people always respect those who defend them and make sacrifices on their behalf. During our tour in the south and western al-Biqa', we felt that the people have special love and respect for those making sacrifices and they show this in some stands. They could show this gratitude in the future. What will be the results? This is the decision of the Lebanese people and we do not want to interfere in their affairs.

[Muwaffaq] There is ambiguity in Syrian-Iranian relations. On one hand, it appears that each side derives support from the other in difficult times, while on the other hand we feel that contradictions appear when the issue concerns peace?

[Khonsari] Iranian-Syrian relations are strategic and have been tested throughout the past years. Both Iran and Syria have seen difficult times but they stood side by side and will continue to do so. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani has said that he has confidence in Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's position. Any step taken by Syria under al-Asad does not create a problem in relations with Iran.

[Muwaffaq] What is the nature of this relationship? Some believe that Syria needs Iran's support to bolster its position in the region. Others believe that Iran is supporting Syria in order to maintain its role.

[Khonsari] Any two countries that have unique, deep, and strategic relations support each other and coordinate constantly.

[Muwaffaq] But the stand on the settlement is not unified. What will happen when there is a settlement? Will the contradictions between the Syrian and Iranian stands come to the surface then?

[Khonsari] I do not believe that differences in our views on the issue of a settlement will disrupt bilateral relations. There ought not to be joint views on all basic issues. Even in a single family there are differences in views between a person and his brother.

[Muwaffaq] Do you expect the restoration of some balance in the future if the elections in Russia bring the communists back to power?

[Khonsari] Our relations with Russia are good and better than they were before. We are cooperating in the economic field. Anyone who closely observes Russian policy can see that the Russians have started, of course quietly, to act to take up their normal position in the region. They are looking toward the east today more than they were doing under Gorbachev, who looked toward the west. Today they are strengthening their relations with the east, including Iran. Remarkably,

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Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who does not receive foreign ministers, received Minister Velayati when he visited Moscow and this made the Europeans think. If this shows anything, it shows that the Russians have started to look toward the Middle East and to oppose U.S. influence in it. If the hardliners come to power, they will naturally move further and further in this direction.

Iran: Paper Questions Nateq-Nuri Statements

LD1905191396 Tehran 'ASR-E MA in Persian 15 May 96 p 2

[Unattributed political commentary: "Why You as Well, Mr. Nateq?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a political party gathering at the Imam Sadeq University, [Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar] Nateq-Nuri analyzed the recent elections, outlined the strategy followed by the Militant Clergy Association, made accusations against rival factions, and said the rivals were among the dangerous tendencies which intended to damage the Islamic and revolutionary essence of the system on the eve of the elections. At another address to the gathering of the commanders and officials of the basij forces of east Tehran, he said the liberals were a serious and dangerous threat for the country. He hoped that the hezbollah would prevent the liberals from entering the Majles from the provinces, as in the case of Tehran. He added that "A liberal government and Majles will prepare the ground for interfering with the red light and violating the values and canons of the revolution". (footnote 1) (RESALAT Sunday 28 April 1996)

At the political gathering at the Imam Sadeq University, he said the active presence of the Militant Clergy Association and its allied groups was the determining factor during the elections in foiling the dangerous liberals who threaten the country. He said the present situation was similar to when, during the elections to the first Majles, the Militant Clergy Association participated in the Great Coalition of the Islamic Republican Party against the liberals and the hypocrites.

Here, we don't intend to evaluate or criticize the speaker's statements. Nor shall we refer to the meaning of his statement portraying the Islamic Republic at a standstill and faced with the problems from the first year of its foundation. Undoubtedly, when he speaks, according to his status on future occasions, of the vigor and strengths of the system, he will compensate for his mistakes and write the text according to context.

But, this is our argument: When did he become aware of this great danger and when did he think that the presence of the military forces was vital for foiling this threat? Was is between the two stages of the elections when his party was on the verge of definite defeat, or was it from the very first year of the revolution that he started to think about this danger?

According to Nateq-Nuri, speaking at the party gathering at Imam Sadeq University, he had felt the danger throughout the term of the fourth Majles and had sought a solution. Explaining the liberal plots during the term of the fourth Majles he stated: "Some people said we should forget the difficulties faced by Muslims in Palestine, Lebanon, Bosnia and Afghanistan ... some even shamelessly opposed the propagation of virtue and prohibition of vice and the ban on satellite dishes. I hope God will not forgive those who show disrespect towards the sacrifices of the martyrs, those who seek power and who allow the undermining of revolutionary canons and values." (footnote 2) (HAMAN)

However, the speaker's previous behavior and statements, prior to the first round of elections, are contrary to the above statement. He might have forgotten some of his previous statements and therefore it would be interesting to remind ourselves of some. Let us not recall however, that during the election campaign for the fourth Majles, his party went into coalition with the group that is now being labelled dangerously liberal and included in its list of candidates the names of some people who support the establishment of relations with the United States. Let us limit ourselves to several other examples.

Before the beginning of the election campaign, the organ of his party said that its political rivals were liberal, anti- revolutionary and opposed to the guardianship of the jurisconsult. But this campaign policy failed because it was not grounded in reality and even the speaker clearly denied that his party was pursuing such a campaign. Once, the correspondent of the English language daily IRAN NEWS asked him: "Do you accept that your friends use the accusation of opposition to the Guardianship of the Jurisconsult to frighten their rivals and push them off the political stage?" Nateq-Nuri replied: "No. Some people say that others want to force them off the stage over the principle of the guardianship of the jurisconsult. This is because the election is approaching and this is a part of the election campaign that various groups are using against each other ... but it does not mean that others oppose the guardianship of the jurisconsult or obedience to the leader, but that we do. No. This is not the case." (footnote 3) ('ASR-E MA, 13 Dec 1995, issue 30)

As you can see, the speaker believes that the allegation that some people are opposed to the guardianship of the jurisconsult and other things, is entirely an election campaign posture by some political groups against each

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other. He clearly declares that others (i.e. all Muslim groups active in the election campaign) believe in the guardianship of the jurisconsult and are obedient to the leader. Therefore, and from his point of view, there were no dangerous liberals opposing Islam, at least until two months ago. Even when rival groups were preparing their list of candidates for the first round of elections, there was much effort to place the speaker's name on the list prepared by the Servants of Construction. Finally, these efforts paid off, and thanks to these enterprises, Nateq-Nuri managed to enter the Majles at the first round and as the first deputy.

In view of the fact that he agreed to have his name on the list prepared by the Servants of Construction, the group could not be the liberals. Since he is devoted to the revolution and its values; and with the sensitivity that he has shown to the liberal danger, he would not have entered the Majles at the price of having his name on the list of the very liberals who are the enemies of the revolution — and the very liberals who are similar to the liberals and hypocrites active during the first years of the revolution. As he stated himself: "I hope God will not forgive those who show disrespect towards the sacrifices of the martyrs, whose who seek power and who allow the undermining of revolutionary canons and values."

Naturally the Coalition of Groups Following the Line of Imam, the Society Defending the Values of the Islamic Revolution and the Ansar-e Hezbollah are not, and have never been, accused of liberalism and such an accusation against them is but a mere joke. And it is not in his status to joke and tease at sober gatherings.

We can conclude that Nateq-Nuri, until the end of the first round of elections, did not believe in the frightening danger of liberals. But he says that he had identified and had been sensitive to the policy and danger of liberalism for a number of years. It is up to him to solve these contradictory statements, but until he does so, we have to interpret the allegorical in reference to the indisputable, and to interpret his allegations as "part of an election campaign against rival groups". If such an interpretation is correct, then the statement by Nateq-Nuri, at the Imam Sadeq University and the gathering of the east Tehran basij commanders, is nothing but an advertising campaign against rival groups and a cover up of the obvious irregularities by his own party during the election campaign. It is up to the reader to judge whether such campaign maneuvers and baseless accusations against rival groups are compatible with religious values and ethical canons.

We end our comment by mentioning two points: 1. If we consider this policy to be a principle, the assertions made by Nateq-Nuri are entirely unprofessional and lack the delicacy and cleverness that a professional politician should observe in his words.

At a gathering of commanders of basij of the western district, Mr Nateq said: "During the recent Majles elections, a number of people intended to cheat over the ballot boxes but the alertness of the basij forces prevented this act." (footnote 4) (JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI, Wednesday 1 May 1996)

Therefore, he has emphasized that the role of basij commanders in the elections has been more than just to encourage the basij forces to vote in favor of his party, and clearly stresses the fact that basij forces were organized to have a physical presence in the constituencies. Regardless of the fact that the task of supervising and implementing the elections has been under the control of his party, the opposite factions have never had a chance to cheat.

It must be asked on what basis does Nateq-Nuri, as the head of the legislative branch, approve the supervision of the ballot boxes by military groups? The speaker of the Majles, who himself passed the election law to the government for implementation, knows better than anyone else that the presence with the ballot boxes of any supervisor other than those who are implementing and supervising the elections and the representatives of the candidates is against the law.

Furthermore, the method of supervising the elections and the preparations necessary to ensure that they are justly implemented and to deal with those who violate the law have been fully foreseen in the election law. If lawbreaking is openly approved and encouraged, especially by the head of the legislative branch, then this can only be an insult to the credibility and prestige of the system inside and outside the country. An alert politician will never make such a mistake.

As far as we know from Nateq-Nuri's behavior he did not believe in any great threat called liberalism, at least by the end of the first round of the recent elections. [preceding sentence printed in boldface]

2. We address the devoted basij and hezbollahis who are committed to the revolution and their intention is to protect its values and aspirations. Basij has proved its devotion and sincerity through years of self-sacrificing work on front of holy defense. This great and at the same time holy asset must remain intact for the basij.

To use this huge asset to support claims which they themselves admit to be nothing but election propaganda is not rational.

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To understand this reality is not a difficult task for the devoted basij and hezbollahi forces, given the growth and maturity that they have achieved during the years of revolution and war.

Iran: Khamene'i Addresses Islamic Guidance Ministry Officials

LD2005125196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At a meeting today with the minister of Islamic culture and guidance and other officials from this ministry, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the eminent leader of the revolution, stressed the importance of following up and supervising the operational stages of various policies and decisions. He explained that culture and character-building cannot be compared with any other issue, because of its incredible importance.

The eminent leader of the revolution said that the Islamic Culture and Guidance Ministry is different from other departments and ministries because its huge size, scope, range of activities, and its contacts with culture. He added: This ministry's responsibility is very grave and important, and it must be fulfilled as excellently and brilliantly as possible, with God's help. Of course, [Mostafa] Mirsalim's knowledge of the sensitivity and importance of cultural matters, as well as the presence of good managers in the movie section and in some other sections of this organization, inspire a considerable amount of confidence.

His Eminence Ayatoliah Khamene'i spoke of the importance of planning and being forward looking and added: In human organizations, which consist of different wills and understandings, one must not confine oneself to planning, policy making, and decision making. One must rather follow up and supervise activities in order to ensure the correct implementation of these matters. Currently, good policies are made in various sectors of the country, but because they are not pursued they are not realized in practice and are lost in a maze of differing wills and interpretations. Of course, in following up various matters, one must not selfishly destroy initiative and creativity. One must rather pursue the implementation of plans and decisions by testing various ideas.

In setting out the factors that contribute to correct implementation of plans and decisions, the eminent leader described issues relating to [personnel] selection as being as important as following up decisions. He said: The aim behind God's creation is the guidance of individuals and if, when it comes to culture, the selection of misguided or unintelligent people — religious though they may be — creates problems in understanding plans and decisions and in realizing correct ideas, ultimately there will be a great deal of waste on the way to the fulfillment of God's plan.

The eminent leader referred to the cultural onslaught of enemies and added: The enemy pursues its cultural onslaught by using such cultural weapons as books, videos, and satellites, and exploiting ideological concepts. The European countries are unhappy about the United States and the Asians are blocking the penetration of videos and satellite channels. Even in the United States itself, voices are raised against corruption and cultural degeneration. If, in such circumstances, anyone denies the principle of a cultural onslaught, they are not necessarily traitors or irreligious people but they are definitely unintelligent or slow.

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i underscored the need to avoid factional issues in cultural arenas, adding: Thinking in a factional manner is like thinking in a tribal manner and any organization that thinks in this way will suffer losses. Factional matters must not be brought into issues relating to culture and selection from any side. Of course, when it is a question of deciding on a specific conclusion arrived at through a nonfactional approach, one must not be afraid of being accused of acting in a factional way; one must complete that task.

The eminent leader described film and cinema as some of the most effective artistic tools, and said: Film is a very important issue. People who produce good movies must be encouraged, strengthened, and supported by various means, and the field must be opened up for them so that the way is clear for the shaping of a good cinema. Of course, young people should be given priority to this end, but others, too, must be given assistance if they act in compliance with standards.

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i referred to the distortions in some films caused by using the language of images or by omitting historical facts such as the role played by the clergy in the Islamic revolution. He added: In the field of cinema, there has so far been nothing that can truly shine. Of course, in the field of war cinema, good films have been produced through the efforts of some good youngsters and by using the rich treasures gained during eight years of sacred defense [Iran-Iraq war]; these must be helped.

The eminent leader referred to the political approach adopted by some international festivals in selecting and magnifying the importance of Iranian films and film producers, and said: In view of such mainly political actions, Islamic and revolutionary movies, with good translations, must be sent to other countries including Arab countries. Also, if a movie is good from the

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cultural point of view and if it does not have any objectionable aspects, it must fall into this category [of films to be promoted].

The eminent leader of the Islamic revolution spoke of the vacuum in the writing of powerful novels. He added: A good novel is considered to constitute a cultural language, the best means of explaining history, and the best kind of publicity. After the revolution, there were some things written in this regard, but some of them, which unfortunately received publication permits as well, set out to distort the Islamic revolution, the war, or the personality of the late Imam [Khomeyni]. Others were weak. Therefore, serious work needs to be done in this area. [passage omitted]

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: Prime Minister Adds 4 New Members to Cabinet

BK1905085796 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 18 May 96

[Report by a "POST reporter" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, May 17 — Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Friday inducted four more members in his cabinet, extending the size of the 8-month-old coalition government to 48 members.

The four new faces included in the cabinet were RPP's [Rashtriya Prajatantra Party] Bishnu Bikram Thapa and Khomari Raya Yadav, Sadbhavana party's Anish Ansari, and independent MP Moti Prasad Pahadi.

Pahadi has been appointed Minister of State for Law and Justice, while Thapa, Yadav and Ansari are assistant ministers for Commerce, Agriculture and Supplies, respectively.

The extension has included all but 3 of the 19 RPP members of Parliament into the Council of Ministers. Party president Surya Bahadur Thapa, leader Lokendra Bahadur Chand and Mirja Dilsad Beg are the only RPP lawmakers outside the cabinet.

Sadbhavana party, the third partner in the coalition, has got one more place in the Executive, which has given the party a 100 percent representation in the cabinet. Of the party's 3 members of Parliament, Hridayesh Tripathi was already sacked from the party, while Ansari is appointed assistant minister for Supplies to assist his own leader Gajendra Narayan Singh,the Minister of Supplies.

Three independents had supported the present coalition against the UML [United Marxist-Leninist]-sponsored no-trust motion against the government in March. Two of them were already in the cabinet while another, Pahadi, also entered the government on Friday.

Friday's extension of the cabinet has provided for two assistant ministers each in the Commerce and Agriculture ministries.

The sudden enlargement of the cabinet has taken the intellectual circle with surprise.

Some opine that Deuba's aptness to include two more RPP members in the cabinet at a time when party workers during the recent NC [Nepali Congress] convention charged him as "bowing to RPP" showed his position.

Obviously, Friday's cabinet extension is done as a reward to RPP members and other colleagues in Parliament who supported the government at the crucial time of the no-trust vote.

Some have interpreted Deuba's move as an attempt to foil the possible bid by UML to topple his government. On Thursday, UML president Manmohan Adhikari vowed to topple Deuba government before mid-July.

It is learnt that the government is also considering promotion to some of RPP assistant ministers shortly. But the Congress CWC [Central Working Committee] is likely to protest this. Shailaja Acharya, the newly appointed vice-president of the NC, said the party would soon call a CWC meet to discuss the cabinet extension.

Constituted with four members on September 12, 1995, the coalition cabinet increased its size to 25 members after ten days. The second expansion which took place in December 1995 had blown the size to 44 members which grew further to 48 on Friday.

Nepal: Minister Writes on Foreign Policy

BK1905093996 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 18 May 96

[Article by Nepalese Foreign Minister Prakash Chandra Lohani: "Foreign Policy of the Coalition Government" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] One among the one hundred eighty nations, Nepal has its own national interests. It is composed of three core elements. First as an independent country it has remained the objective of all governments in Nepal to strengthen its national independence and sovereignty. There can never be any compromise on this issue. Second, as an independent country, it is Nepal's national interest to expand its economic, political and cultural links with all the neighbouring countries and beyond based on the principle of sovereign equality and mutual sharing of benefits. Third, as an independent and a peaceful country it is Nepal's interest to try to take

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an active past in the committee of nations in order to promote peace and the evolution of a just world order.

Nepal's geography puts it in a strategic position. It lies between two great countries of Asia with different political system and with power projections that, other things remaining the same, are going to be significant variables in the world system in the 21st century. Therefore our relations with India and China are strategic and Nepal should always retain the sensitivity to their vital national interest as long as it does not infringe upon our own to remain as independent sovereign and an economically developing nation. Nepal has been consistently following this perspective and it is in line with this thinking that we have repeatedly stressed the fact that we will not allow our territory to be used against our neighbours national interest of territorial sovereignty and integrity.

Stability, renewal and growth

Nepal's relations with India are complex and multi dimensional. We are culturally close and economic interactions are extensive. Whether one goes to Pashupatinath, Biswanath or Rameshwaram it is easy to feel our bonds of common culture. In fact the invisible thread of a common cultural orientation towards many issues of life and living is not a phenomena that characterizes just Nepal and India; it is something to be found in whole of South Asia in spite of differences in religion.

Cultural closeness, however does not always guarantee peace and amity. Similarity of culture becomes a positive element of peace and co-operation if there is an underlying respect among nations for each other's national interests, aspirations and constraints.

Nepal's relations with China are relatively less complex as compared to India. The economic links are less extensive and cultural links spanning over centuries are significant and provide a historical backdrop to our present relationship. Like with India however historical links can become a positive factor in our relationship primarily in the context of national interests of both the countries.

As we stand close to the 20th century, it does not take much imagination to realize that the 21st century will see a great deal of dynamism and material growth in Asia. China is already in the fast track and there are indications that India is also determined not to loose this momentum. As a yam sandwiched between two potentially great powers many in Nepal find the situation confusing and difficult. But the changes and dynamism that we see around ourselves also present us with an opportunity for growth and development of our society and nation that would not have been possible before. For the first time in history the changing mind set of our neighbours on a host of economic and political issues as well as the vigorous growth of their economies presents us opportunities that we never had before for the upliftment of our nation. Our geography now is an advantage that we should be aware of. One can call it a positivist approach but it is also a realistic approach consistent with the national interest of the country. To make it work we have to think of three important considerations and they are: (a) stability in our relationship b) renewal of our relationship and (c) growth of our relationship. All these three variables must be activated in a structure of co- operation and harmony so that our relationship with our immediate neighbours can successfully cope the challenges of our time.

We aim for stability in our relationship with our neighbours. By stability we mean stability in our perception of our national interests no matter which party comes to power. Similarly it also means an understanding about each other's sensitivities so that unpredictable behavioural responses are avoided as far as possible. Stability in this sense helps to evolve regularity and balance in our relationship.

Stability however, cannot be viewed as a static phenomena. In this fast changing world our intellectual frame of reference to perceive our relationship with other nations does not remain the same. Take for example the concept of security perception. It had one set of meaning during the Cold War which may not be relevant at the present. Similarly the whole idea as an engine of growth conjures a different image among us today than what it meant a few years ago. Take the case of trade relationship between Nepal and India. It has generally been assumed that preferential trading arrangements boosts trade for mutual gain. But this may not hold true in all conditions. We have a preferential trading arrangement with India that borders on free trade. There is no tariff on agricultural trade between Nepal and India and if one complies with the rules of foreign criteria there is concession available to Nepali manufactured exports to India. But the fact remains that Nepal's trade deficit with India continues to increase rapidly and to some extent the same problem is also being experienced with China. Once we accept this reality, it is obvious that old approaches are not working. This brings the need for a renewal in our relationship so that it is able to face squarely the problems without any apprehension or misunderstanding.

Stability and renewal, if they are properly handled, will lead to a growth in our relationship that could lead to a qualitative transformation more in line with the needs and aspiration of our people and our national interests. The important point is that the core of components of

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our national interests do not change but our willingness for renewal means that we are willing to examine the assumptions underlying our decisions. It is a process that can provide new perceptions to old problems leading to a qualitative transformation in our relationship and therefore its growth. The new approach among countries in South Asia towards the role of SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] as a regional institution for development is a case in point.

In line with this thinking the present government has taken a number of steps to revitalize our relationship with our immediate neighbours and with other countries in the region. The response that we have received gives us cause for much hope and optimism. We have found that all countries in the region are in what we have labeled as the renewal phase in their relationship with each other. There is, therefore, a real possibility that in the years to come that we could experience a qualitative transformation in the relationship among South Asian countries.

India and China

As far as Nepal's relation with India is concerned, the renewal phase in our relationship becomes obvious from a number of initiatives that both countries have taken in the field of water resources, trade, transit and civil aviation. For the first time, Nepal and India have agreed to the harnessing of water resources of Nepal based strictly on the principles of equality and mutual benefit. The agreement on the integrated development of the Mahakali river is a testimony to the application of this concept. Similarly on trade perhaps for the first time both countries are seriously trying to dismantle all sorts of non tariff barriers that have cropped up in the past and weakened our efforts to achieve a balanced trade relationship. On transit we have agreed in principle that Nepal needs an alternative route to Radhikapur to trade with third countries via Bangladesh. On civil aviation we are close to achieving the implementation of an open sky policy that will be of benefit to both the countries. Work needs to be done to operationlise these ideas and we are hoping that once the new government is formed in India we can move ahead successfully.

Nepal and India have a long open border. Considering the overall climate of political tension and strife in the region perhaps it is now time for both our countries to think over this phenomena and take measures that is in the interest of both. Basically, both our countries should now discuss seriously the modalities for keeping track of cross border movement of people on both sides so that the open border does not become a source of new problems in the future.

The initiatives that Nepal and India have taken to strengthen their relationship during the last few months represents a renewal phase. If successfully completed it can lead to a qualitative transformation in our relationship. It is consistent with Nepal's national interests and also beneficial for India. It is a win situation where both countries stand to gain.

Like with India, Nepal's relation with China has also entered a renewal phase based on appreciation of each other's national interests, opportunities and constraints. The basic thrust is to strengthen the level of trust and confidence that both nations have upon each other. For this purpose the coalition government has taken some new initiatives. When Prime Minister Deuba visited China an agreement that allows for mutual consultation at the Foreign Secretary level on bilateral, regional and international issues was signed. Similarly, keeping in view the structure of economic transformation that is taking place in China both governments have agreed to constitute a non-governmental co-operation forum consisting of industrialists, businessmen and academicians to undertake initiatives to promote new interactions that are mutually beneficial and in the interest of both countries.

A new shift

From a foreign policy perspective, the growing end towards regional economic integration within the framework of macro economic liberalisation has important implication for economic diplomacy which is becoming an increasingly important component of foreign policy. The contents of economic diplomacy have changed greatly over the years depending on the intellectual perception of the subject, distribution of power among nation states and the norms and values characterising inter-state relationship. In the colonial days, for example, there was increasing economic interaction among various societies but it was a hegemonistic relationship where the concept of sharing of benefits from trade applied only to powerful nations. The intellectual thinking justified it on the ground of free trade, but it was a freedom that was one sided and thus not of any use to the loosing party. Once colonialism lost its grip, the emerging new nations of the world wanted a two way relationship that would be mutually beneficial. Conscious of the one sided gains in the name of free trade the newly independent countries generally opted for a restricted trade regime hoping to avoid the experience of the past. During the last few years, however, the intellectual perception of the problem and its solution has undergone a sea of change. A restrictive trade regime combined with similar other policies did not bring the desired results leading to a new battle cry of economic liberal-

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isation, competition and a new eagerness to use market forces for resource mobilisation and allocation on a global scale. The new neo-classical liberalisation paradigm has led to increasing globalisation that includes capital transfers, joint ventures and direct foreign investments in an unprecedented scale. Most countries of the world are now a part of this trend including those that had relied primarily in a command economy in the past. In Nepal too, we can not remain aloof from this trend and a new focus of our foreign policy will have to be on an expansion of mutually beneficial trade and investments promoting measures rather than a mechanistic reliance on bilateral aid and grants. It is a shift that will be difficult but necessary.

As a committed member of SAARC, Nepal wants to increase it economic, political and cultural links with all the countries of South Asia based on the principles of equality, and mutual respect. We feel that as a regional cooperation forum SAARC can be helpful in creating an atmosphere conducive to trade creation among the member states in the region. There is already an agreement to reduce trade barriers under SAPTA [South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement]. One can hope that once tariff rates are reduced the advantage of low transfer cost within the countries in the region will lead to new economic benefits. Similarly if we can move from SAPTA to SAFTA [South Asian Free Trade Agreement] in the next ten years or so, it will imply a qualitative transformation in the relationship among the SAARC members states that may even have a positive impact in the search for solutions of political problems that seem insurmountable at the present. It is this vision that Nepal has in mind and it is towards this objective that the present government intends to work.

Nepal's relations with other countries are based on friendship, goodwill understanding and co-operation. We have received economic assistance from Japan, Germany, UK, USA, France and many countries of Europe. As we have both political and economic components in our relations with them we will continue to promote and consolidate our relations in the coming days. We are grateful to our donor countries for their support to our development initiatives, including support to liberalize our economic policies while increasing our investment is human resource development. Our relations with Russia remain strong and we aim to strengthen them in the future. In the Middle East, the peace process will continue its momentum until a durable peace is at last achieved.

Nepal has maintained good relations with the European Economic Community Commissions, and has received economic assistance to various projects.

The support given by European Commission, UNHCR, international Non-Government Organisations, USA and other countries on the problem of Bhutanese refugees is appreciated by all. We are particularly thankful to the European parliament for expressing its deep concern about the refugees from Bhutan and the violation of their fundamental human right to nationality. We hope that with goodwill and understanding from our friends far and near, the Bhutanese refugees will return back to their country with dignity and honour.

Support to the UN

In four years time we will be entering the 21st century and a new world is in the making. We may not be able to outline the many details of this new world but one thing that seems to be certain is a growing degree of interdependence among states in the face of a strong pull towards retaining as much as possible independence in decision making. This contradictory phenomena may emerge as on of the causes of conflicts and tension in the future. It will affect the effectiveness on many international institutions that now exist and may come into existence in the future. For more powerful nations international institutions will continue to be seen both an asset and a liability. As an institutional instrument for maximising national interests, international institutions will be useful for they will provide the basis for coordination and legitimacy. But their membership composition will present a problem for it will also consist of the poor and the weak. In spite of this ambivalence on the of the part of the rich and powerful countries, the role of the international institutions like the UN will continue to increase. The trend towards globalization and advance in technology will require increased coordination and some degree of predictability in the behaviour of countries. Further the values associated with democracy, justice and equality will continue to provide the impetus needed for institutions necessary for conflict arbitration and rule making however weak that may be. Nepal therefore strongly supports the UN and is in favour of strengthening its role in the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Nepal has participated and will continue to participate in the peace keeping operations of the UN and in the maintenance of international peace and security. Nepal considers the UN as an institution where the rights and aspirations of small and developing countries can be articulated with some reason and hope.

In this context, we are working closely with other developing countries, in the UN and other international fora, to uphold the interest of developing and Least Developed Countries and are in favour of the need to ensure the adequate flow of investment resources

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to developing countries. The international agreed aid targets for the developing and the least developed countries should be fulfilled and debt relief and access to resources from multilateral financial institutions on favourable and on more concessional terms should be provided to those countries.

Nepal is fully in favour of disarmament and has supported the comprehensive and global disarmament. She has welcomed all measures and policies aimed at limiting the production, stockpiling and use of weapons of mass destruction and has urged all countries to scrupulously observe the non proliferation treaty. In this context, it is our fervent hope that the two potential nuclear power in our region will resist the temptation to go nuclear.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Says No Objection to 4-Year Term After Elections

BK1605130996 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 12 May 96 p 1

[Report by Tariq Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said that the oppositions demand to hold mid-term elections had automatically become irrelevant because her government had crossed that period now. She also said she had no objections to a four year term after the next general elections.

Talking to reporters on her special plane while flying back home from Sweden Friday night, she said the opposition had now realised that the demand for mid-term polls was no more relevant because "we have completed 55 percent of our term now, and are nearing the next elections to be held in 1998."

The prime minister said she was prepared for a four-year term of government to be effective from the next elections after having a level playing field. "We have been elected to be in government for five years, a period which is very important for the stability, continuation of economic policies and the social action programme started by us."

She said it was not a personal matter that she should hold the present official position for five years, but her government wanted to completely implement policies started by it.

She said MNAs [members of National Assembly] and MPAs [members of Provincial Assembly] could increase the number of seats of the assemblies if they so wanted. The country's population was 60 million when the present number of seats was fixed, she said, adding that legislators could not pay full attention to their constituencies because of their large size.

Ms Bhutto said she had always tried that the oppositions should cooperate with her government in bringing about electoral reforms, in undoing the Eighth amendment etc, and was willing to talk to them any time. [sentence as published]

She welcomed leader of the opposition Nawaz Sharif's recent speech in Beijing and said he had demonstrated maturity. "The way he has supported the nation's policies shows new understanding and outlook."

To a question about Imran Khan's allegations that government agencies were responsible for the blast at the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Trust Hospital, the prime minister said without mentioning his name that some people wanted to gain political mileage and "cheap publicity by saying such things." This will benefit India only," she said.

Asked about allegations of hashish smuggling against Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmed Ali, she said the accusations were malicious and malafide. "He had nothing to do with the rice factory. It goes to his credit that the day the allegation was hurled, he came to me and said he wanted to resign till investigations were completed in the case. But I said 'no, I know you well."

The prime minister said the way the FIA [Federal Investigation Agency] had investigated the case had added more credit to the foreign minister's name and increased his prestige. We have approached Interlope to get hold of the smugglers. At no stage did the government even think about hushing up the case." [opening quotation marks missing as published]

Asked about the grant of permission for starting a TV channel, Ms Bhutto said when Air Marshal Hakimullah was the air chief, she had asked him why the Shaheen Foundation did not start a cargo service. The government gave an old plane to the foundation on its book value for this purpose, although PIA [Pakistan International Airlines] had opposed it, she said.

She said when the present PAF [Pakistan Air Force] chief wrote to her seeking permission for the TV channel, she immediately granted it. She said the government had not moved against a PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz] MNA, who was developing the Bahria colony in Rawalpindi, because it wanted development. "Scandals are being unnecessarily made out of every thing," she said.

Asked about the law and order situation in Punjab, the prime minister said a lot more needed to be done, and

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the chief minister, the governor and the senior minister were making their best efforts in the province.

However, she said that the recent blasts were terrorist acts in which some foreign hand was involved because India wanted to intimidate Pakistan during the sham electoral process in occupied Kashmir.

"We will not be cowed down by such incidents," she said, adding that some family feuds also lead to different incidents while some sectarian elements were also involved in such acts. Asked to comment on the results of the Indian elections, she said India was an island of instability while Pakistan one of stability.

The prime minister said the only sour point in Pak-Britain relations was the handling of Altaf Hussain, but it had not affected the overall excellent bilateral relations. "Britain is making an investment of 2 billion pounds in Pakistan," she pointed out. Talking about her visit to Sweden, she said she briefed the Swedish leaders about the situation in occupied Kashmir, the sham elections there and India's nuclear and missile programme.

Sweden's view, Ms Bhutto said, was that Europe should pay more attention to the subcontinent keeping in view the massive human rights violations in held Kashmir.

She said contracts and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) worth $660 million had been signed between the two govts and private sectors. About child labour, the prime minister said she told Swedish leaders that the concerned NGO was not raising its voice for human rights violations but had indulged in a "trained war". She told them that the NGO [nongovernment organization] had misled some foreigners that the Christian boy Iqbal Masih was 12 years old, while in fact he was 19 years old, and he was killed due to a personal dispute and not by the so-called "carpet mafia."

She said witnesses of the murder case were being offered $1 lakh each as bribe not to appear in the court to state the facts, and the case had damaged Pakistan's carpet export by $200m. The PM said her trip to Sweden was a sentimental journey because the last premier who had visited was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto [ZAB] in 1976, and "at every step, I was reminded of him. I stayed in the same guest house (Haga Palace), where ZAB had, and the present king, while being in the Swedish foreign ministry before assuming the present office, prepared and read out some papers on ZAB."

Pakistan: Islamabad TV Reports Tension 'Mounting' in Kashmir

BK1905134696 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The crippling strike by 200,000 government employees in held Kashmir has entered the seventh day. Tension in the valley is mounting as people refuse to be intimidated by Indian authorities bent upon holding sham elections. Our special correspondent Ghulam Nabi Khayal reports from New Delhi:

[Begin recording] An all-out strike being observed by the government employees in Kashmir entered in its the seventh day today. About 200,000 civil servants are staying away from their duties in protest against holding of elections to the Indian parliament in the state. Freedom fighters outfits have given the call for the unprecedented strike beginning last Monday.

Reports reaching here from Srinagar said that the entire administrative setup in the valley of Kashmir is adversely affected with the offices, schools, banks, and semiofficial business centers closed down indefinitely. The authorities have dispatched more than 10,000 employees to Kashmir from the neighboring provinces to attend to their election duties.

Meanwhile, several unions of medicos and paramedical staffers have demanded a judicial probe into the killing of the noted surgeon Dr. M.S. Malik, who was knocked to death by a speeding Border Security Force vehicle in the Regal Chowk on Srinagar yesterday.

Ghulam Nabi Khayal, PTV News, New Delhi. [end recording]

Pakistan: Spokesman Condemns Attempt on Life of Kashmiri Leader

BK1805145696 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Life remains paralyzed in the Indian-held valley of Kashmir as people observed total strike to protest Indian designs of holding sham elections in the valley. The call was given by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference to foil the attempt to hoodwink world opinion about the real wishes of the Kashmiri people, who want to exercise their right of self-determination. Two hundred thousand Kashmiri Government employees abstained from duty for the fifth day today despite official threats. The strike is being observed in protest against the occupation authorities efforts to use force for the polls duty which has been boycotted by employees.

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All Parties Hurriyat Conference has strongly denounced attempts on the life of a prominent All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader, Syed Ali Gilani. The conference leaders appealed to the world community to take immediate notice of the deteriorating situation in occupied Kashmir and exert pressure on India to stop its ruthless repressive measures in the valley. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference held Indian forces responsible for the two attacks on Syed Ali Gilani's residence in Srinagar.

Pakistan has condemned the attempt on the life of Syed Ahmad Gilani and called it a part of the continuous process aiming to eliminate the leadership of the Kashmiris. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad today that the massive deployment of Indian troops and the irregular elections staff in Srinagar is part of the phased polls drama in the Kashmir Valley. However, the people of Kashmir have expressed their opinion as reflected by the Hurriyat Conference stand that the elections cannot be a substitute to plebiscite. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has already rejected the elections in held Kashmir as fake and a fraud.

Meanwhile, in held Kashmir Valley, extensive military crackdowns were carried out in Srinagar, Uri, Pulwama, Islamabad, and Kupwara areas. Houses were ransacked and inmates subjected to violence. A school building was set ablaze in Islamabad area and another in Uri. In retaliatory action, mujahideen fired rockets at military bunkers in Doda, inflicting a number of casualties on troops and causing extensive damage to bunkers. Two soldiers were killed in this action. Two mujahideen were martyred and troops suffered considerable casualties in a fierce clash in Kupwara District. Three soldiers were injured in a hand grenade attack at Trigam bus stand. A clash was also reported from Islamabad District in which a number of casualties were inflicted on Indian soldiers.

Pakistan: Army Deployed to 7 'Sensitive' Cities in Punjab

BK2105105596 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 21 May 96 p 1

[THE MUSLIM Bureau report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore, May 20 — The Punjab government has declared seven cities "sensitive" and deployed army there to assist the local administration in maintaining peace during the month of Muharram-ul-Haram. The cities include Lahore, Sheikhupura, Jhang, Sargodha, Multan, Mandi Bahauddin and Bahawalpur.

In Lahore the contingents of army were seen patrolling on the city roads on Monday.

Meanwhile, the Punjab police has tightened security all over the province. In Lahore different police parties were deployed at the busy crossings and sensitive areas, to keep watch on miscreants.

The police officials have been directed to thoroughly check the passers-by, particularly motorcyclists at night and not to allow any unconcerned person to move near by the Majlis being held in the city.

Pakistan: Riaz Khokhar in Islamabad for 'Important Consultations'

BK2005162396 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 20 May 96 pp 1, 3

[Report by JANG special correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Islamabad—According to reliable sources, Riaz Khokhar, Pakistan's high commissioner in India, has arrived in Islamabad for important consultations in the wake of the formation of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] government in India. He has held detailed talks with Foreign Ministry officials and with the minister for foreign affairs regarding the latest situation in Pakistan-Indian relations. He is likely to hold separate meetings with the president and the prime minister to apprise them of his views about the political situation in India before leaving for New Delhi on 23 May.

Diplomatic observers say that it would be difficult for Riaz Khokhar to continue his duties in Delhi if the BJP remains in power because the BJP had declared him persona non grata and had demanded his expulsion from India only three weeks before coming into power.

Pakistan: Indian Politics Viewed as 'Blowing Hot and Cold' in Future

BK1605063996 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 14 May 96 p 7

[Editorial: "India: Polls Fallout"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Indian parties are bracing themselves for a bitter struggle for forming the government in the wake of the 11th general elections which produced a hung parliament. With none of the three likely claimants Congress(I), BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and allies and NF/LF [National Front-Left Front] and allies having a minimum majority, a government would only be possible if any two of these coalesce. The Congress has indicated its readiness to support a NF/LF government from "outside", spurred more by its desire to keep the Hindu extremists led by BJP out of power, than to ensure a smooth transition of authority after the polls.

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If such a permutation eventually takes shape, it will the keep the Hindu communalists out of power, but not necessarily produce a stable system. With the Congress(I) playing the role of a king maker, it is not difficult to foresee the already somewhat disjointed NF-LF running into difficulties. The left parties particularly, which find it difficult to compromise on policies that conflict with their dogma would not easily accept the support of a party that might have its own agenda. This keeps the issue of a grand conglomeration of disparate forces united in their dislike of the BJP, still wide open.

While working out a viable combination to form a government remains India's problem, the neighboring states cannot but view with deep concern this uncertainty in the politics of the regional giant. The inability of the electorate to reach a consensus mandate reflects grave schisms in the country, which divide the nation on class, caste and communal lines. The BJP could not have emerged as the single biggest party without having support for its doctrine of hate and violence. There must be millions who sincerely believe in what it preaches, to vote for it. It would, therefore, be wrong to easily dismiss the extremism of the communalists as electoral rhetoric.

Given such a scenario, the region will have to prepare itself to face a prolonged period of an India blowing hot and cold. Weakly placed governments perforce tend to adopt tough postures in an effort to rally support. Gestures of militancy and pushing the armament option are germane to such regimes more as a survival policy than a principle.

Even the Narasimha Rao government, in spite of its majority, showed considerable enthusiasm in pursuing a virulent anti-Pakistan line in its propaganda, with a threat of war becoming almost a figure of speech. It is this aspect of the scenario in India that is disturbing, although most neighbours would hopefully expect to see the country collapsing in its political and economic miseries. With the last word on the workable coalition that will emerge still to be said, it would be unfounded optimism to look forward to happier times in the region without the BJP and Congress(I) in power.

Pakistan: Official Suspended for Allowing Team To Enter Afghanistan

BK2105102496 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 21 May 96 p 5

[Report by Behroz Khan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar — The political authorities of Khyber Agency Saturday suspended services of an employee posted at the Pakistan-Afghan border for allowing Qazi Hussain Ahmad-led delegation to enter Afghanistan against the directives of the provincial Home Department.

The suspension from service of Zareerullah has flared up speculations that the Jamaat chief is bringing Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani and his hitherto arch rival Golboddin Hekmatyar closer to each other regardless of Pakistan's wishes. "He had been directed to allow only Qazi Hussain Ahmed and not the members of his party. But Zareerullah acted against the orders. No one can cross the border without getting prior permission from the Home Department," concerned officials told THE NEWS.

The Jamaat delegation, comprised of Qazi Hussain Ahmad, Prof Ibrahim, Dr Murad Ali Shah, Shabir Ahmad and Afrasiab Afridi, crossed Torkham border Friday and reached Kabul on Sunday.

The delegation stayed at Jalalabad to hold detailed talks with Hekmatyar before meeting President Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and Prof Sayyaf in Kabul in a bid to broker a new alliance between the two sides.

Informed sources claimed that Pakistan had conveyed to Qazi that it was not happy with his (Qazi) endeavours as the Jamaat chief would not only detach Hekmatyar from Islamabad's influence but was furthering Iranian agenda on the future of Afghanistan.

Sources said Qazi has been given a green signal by Hekmatyar to broker any fresh accord with Rabbani-led coalition government on behalf of Hezb-e-Eslami which seemed fed up with the activities of Supreme Coordination Council of Islamic Revolution of Afghanistan (SCCIRA).

It has also been learnt that Hekmatyar was approached several times by top Pakistan army officials advising the Afghan leader to avoid joining hands with the pro-Iran Afghan administration. But the Hezb chief has not agreed to act on the lines drawn by Pakistan due to his differences with Islamabad policy on befriending Taleban Islamic movement.

Hekmatyar has claimed in recent interviews quoting Afghan Government that the United States and its allies, a clear reference to Pakistan, have offered President Rabbani to convince some of the major Afghan factions to cooperate with Kabul and end the continued hostility if Rabbani agreed to the formation of a federal system in Afghanistan.

Hekmatyar did not name the factions but dropped the hints that the factions could be Taleban and Rashid Dostum, both considered to be closed to Pakistan and U.S.

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Pakistan: Allegations India Bought U.S. Politicians Viewed

BK1705034896 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 16 May 96 p 6

[Editorial: "India Bids To Buy U.S. Politicians"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Before the new Indian ambassador to US Naresh Chandra arrived in Washington, his dubious reputation had already reached there. Calling a spade a spade, the NEWS INDIA TIME carried a story that Naresh Chandra was being sent to Washington to work in close cooperation with his brother, a former RAW [Research & Analysis Wing] agent, to oversee the Indian agencies plan to smuggle into the US tons of CFC [chlorofluocarbon] gas worth $3 billion. This plan was not mere speculation. The operation was actually underway when the US Customs recently busted a CFC smuggling ring with Indian connections. The value of CFC smuggled by the gang placed at US $52 million. Pakistan has been accusing India of sponsoring the smuggling of banned chemicals including narcotic reagents into Pakistan. The allegation, however, was ignored as part of mud-slinging by a traditional rival.

Bad habits die hard. With India they are there to stay. There is irrefutable evidence that the involvement of Indian government in illegal practices through official network is not restricted to the smuggling of banned chemicals, gems or precious stones. The diabolic expertise is being employed by the Indian embassy in Washington to illegally sponsor election campaigns of pro-Indian or anti-Pakistani candidates using Indian-Americans as cover. The object was to scuttle the Brown Amendment and the return of Pak-US relations to normalcy. About 19 Democratic candidates received money before the 1994 elections. Under Federal Election Commission rules, it is illegal for non-citizens to make political contributions, or to make donations in another person's name. Following an investigation by the Baltimore Sun into an Indian American fund, it came out that the money came from donors with direct links to an Indian-American named Gadhia who confessed in the court of receiving at least $46,000 from officials of the Indian embassy in the US. According to Gadhia the money was paid to influence heavy weights at the Capitol Hill. The "donors" comprised Indian-Americans including engineers, doctors, cooks, bus boys and students "who had never made political donations before. The money donated by them was reimbursed by Gadhia or his nephew.

The Indian attempt to block the Brown Amendment did not succeed but it wasn't a total failure either. Senator Paul S Sarbanes who received $4500, bitterly opposed the Brown Amendment in the Senate. He, therefore, did not oppose the Amendment on principles or dictates of his conscience. To compliment Indian generosity, Senator Sarbanes went to the illogical extent of demanding that Pakistan be asked to refund all the money it received from the US prior to the imposition of Pressler sanctions. He confirmed that money not only speaks louder, it also spits venom.

The former Indian Ambassador S S Roy was accused by Congressman Dan Burton of dabbling in the domestic politics of the US. Roy had also been involved with fund raising efforts on behalf of Senator Larry Pressler.

The Indians were no doubt inspired by Israelis who have successfully been tailoring the US policies to serve Zionist interests the world over. Indians were also encouraged by the magnitude of the US tolerance regarding Israeli meddling with the domestic politics of the US.

How does the US react to the tentative adventures of India, will determine how good a contender India is to the place Israel occupies in US decision-making.

Pakistan: MQM Seeks COAS Help Against Extra-Judicial Killings

BK2105110296 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 21 May 96 p 1

[THE FRONTIER POST Bureau report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi — Senator Ishtiaq Azhar has appealed to Chief of the Army Staff [COAS] Gen. Jehangir Karamat toward what he termed were the government's atrocities on the MQM (A) [Muhajir Qaumi Movement (Altaf)] activists and extra-judicial killings.

This he said while addressing a press conference here at press club on Monday. Tariq Javed, Ajmal Dehlavi, Shoaib Bokhari, Shaikh Liaquat and Qazi Khalid were also present on the occasion.

To a question Azhar said that "we are not inviting martial law but doing the same which did the PNA [Pakistan National Alliance] during its movement against ZAB [Zulfigar Ali Bhutto] government in 1977". He however did not explain what would be the role of the army and how it would act in accordance with their expectation. To a question that they were seeking help from the "institution" which had launched operation against them in 1992, he could not satisfy the questioner.

Ajmal Dehlavi, chief of the MQM (A)'s negotiation team informed the newsmen that he along with Shoaib Bokhari met Sindh Governor Kamal Azfar and apprised him of their party's concern over the government's attitude towards MQM (A).

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Dehlavi claimed that the governor had assured his cooperation in ending extra-judicial killings and return of hides and skins of sacrificial animals which were confiscated by the authorities from the MQM's Khidmat Khalq Committee.

He said talks between the government and MQM team might start soon, as the governor had also assured to accept the MQM's demands however, he did not give the deadline in this regard.

The MQM leaders also explained their concern over killing of three more activists allegedly at the hands of the police recently and said such acts would eclipse the prospects of the dialogue.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Troops Strengthen Position in Newly Liberated Areas

BK2005160096 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops are in the process of consolidating in the newly liberated areas. According to the Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry, search operations conducted yesterday helped the troops to locate two abandoned LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] camps. One was at the (Polalai) West, while the other was north of Tunnalai. The security forces recovered 200 helmets from one of the camps. Operation Riviresa Three is continuing.

Over 400 LTTE cadres have been killed by the security fores in the Eastern Province so far this year. The forces pursuing the terrorists, who were on the run, killed as many as (?114) terrorists in the Batticaloa District alone during heightened operations over the past two weeks. Security forces told LANKAPUVATH that according to the latest figures, 427 terrorists have been killed while the number of soldiers killed in action in the east during the same period was 154. Ground troops backed by air cover from fighter bombers and helicopter gunships are carrying out attacks on LTTE jungle bases. According to eyewitnesses, as many as 75 terrorists were killed and 40 others wounded in the villages of Shantivelli, near the Batticaloa town two weeks ago.

The security sources said that an important development now was that the people did not support the LTTE. Instead, they were providing information about terrorist activities to the police and the security forces. Recently, the people informed the troops that a large number of LTTE cadres were trying to infiltrate Shantivelli. The security forces were able to inflict heavy casualties on the terrorists as they had received information in advance from the public.

Sri Lanka: Government Troops Continue 'Flushing Out' LTTE in Jaffna

BK2105024096 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 21 May 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops, who recently brought the entire Jaffna peninsula under their control with the Riviresa III operation, are now engaged in the process of consolidating in the liberated areas and flushing out pockets of enemy resistance.

The operational headquarters of the ministry of defence said search operations were underway in the peninsula. Soldiers came across two abandoned LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] camps in Puloly West and Thunnalai on Sunday. They recovered 200 helmets from one of the camps.

One Tiger died in an attack by the security forces on a group of Tigers at Kodikamam in the Thenmarachchi division of the Jaffna peninsula on Sunday morning. His body was recovered, along with one T-56 weapon, one magazine, three hand grenades, four 'Arul' grenades and one identification tag. No soldier was injured.

Meanwhile, security forces believe that at least four Tigers died in a confrontation with troops at the Kent Farm, Weli Oya, on Sunday.

During a subsequent search operation, army personnel recovered the bodies of a home guard and a civilian killed in the crossfire. One soldier was also killed and six others wounded.

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